


# MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1888.

## The London and North-Western Railway.\*



"THE North Western Territory extends from London in the south to Carlisle in the north, and from Cambridge in the east to Pembroke and Holyhead in the west—a distance of 300 miles in length by 200 miles in breadth. The seat of the Government is at present in London, but the capital is Crewe, a town of 35,000 inhabitants consisting entirely of the employés of the Government and their families. The total number of the civil service does not fall far short of 60,000. The head of the Executive, who is known by the title of General Manager, is George Findlay. The annual budget amounts to £10,000,000, while the funded debt is upwards of a hundred million pounds sterling." It will be, we are persuaded, in some such words as these, that, once the conservative mind of the British schoolmaster has awakened to the fact that counties and Lord Lieutenants are anachronisms, and that the United Kingdom has been divided

\* It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the following pages make no claim to describe the North-Western Railway as a whole. The author has only attempted to pick out such salient points—each in his belief a sample of railway working in its most highly-developed form—as are most likely to interest non-technical readers, and to be within the comprehension of a non-technical writer. He has to express his grateful thanks to very many members of the North-Western staff, more especially to Mr. Findlay, the General Manager, and Mr. Webb, the Chief Mechanical Engineer, but for whose kindness this paper never could have been written. To them and to their colleagues is due whatever interest it may have for its readers.—W. M. A.

and given to the great railway companies, the Board School pupil of the future will be taught his geography.

With Crewe then it is only right that this sketch of the North-Western Railway should begin. That Crewe is the heart of the system was perhaps never more clearly shown than in July last, when, in celebration of the Jubilee—not only of Her Majesty, but of the Grand Junction Railway—officials and servants assembled there from all parts of the country for a ceremony, at which Sir Richard Moon, as Chairman of the North-Western Railway, presented to the citizens a public park as the gift of the Company, and the gift was received by the Company's chief mechanical engineer as the mayor of the town. On that occasion a pedestal was erected on either side of the entrance gateway. On each pedestal was a Crewe-built engine; the one was "No. 1," the other "No. 3000." The duties of the mayor, apart from his municipal functions, can hardly be a sinecure. At Crewe itself in the "shops" there are 6000 hands under his charge, while in the carriage works at Wolverton and the waggon works at Earlstown there are not far short of as many more. The 2500 engines on the line with, let us say, three to four men apiece as cleaners, fitters, firemen and drivers, must also, one would think, need some supervision; to say nothing of the signals, the pumping gear, the hydraulic capstans and lifts in every warehouse and goods yard all over the line.

But Mr. Webb rises above mere routine like this. Of his most important invention, the compound locomotive, we shall have more to say anon. Meanwhile we must just notice that as we pass through the station he points to a buffer of his design. If a train runs into what railway men term a "dead end," the injury is usually caused not by the first shock, but by the subsequent recoil. To meet this these buffers are designed, which press, not against springs as in the case of ordinary buffers, but against a column of soapy water stored in a cylinder under huge pressure. A shock which forces back the buffers drives the water through minute holes into an outer jacket, and thence into an air-vessel under pressure, and there is then nothing left to cause them to spring back as the pressure of the blow gradually relaxes. A patent railway carriage handle of his invention, enabling the door to be opened from the inside and yet avoiding the risk that it may be opened unintentionally by children, was exhibited by Mr. Webb at the recent Manchester

Exhibition. The handle is fixed almost at the top of the door-frame, and when pulled downwards presses upon the spring latch of the ordinary handle and forces it back. When Mr. Webb has settled the affairs of the North-Western Locomotive Department and the municipal business of his borough, he devotes his leisure to agriculture and speaks on the subject before the Cheshire Agricultural Society, of which he was the president for the year 1887.

From Crewe Station to Crewe Works, we journey in what is termed a "cab." To an outsider there is nothing more bewildering than the habit railway men have of taking an ordinary English word and giving it some special technical sense. Most of us think we know what a bank is. To a railway man, a "bank" is, in the first place, an incline, whether it be through a tunnel or over an embankment it matters not, and secondly, a platform when used not for passengers but for goods. The "shipping" office at Broad Street Station dispatches goods, not to India and China, but to Manchester and Leeds and Birmingham. Similarly a "cab" is primarily the screen and half-roof that protects the men on an engine from the weather. Secondly, and that is its sense here, it denotes a truck on low wheels, open at the sides but closed at the ends and roofed over, which conveys passengers backwards and forwards along the two miles of line that intervene between Crewe Station and the furthest shop. Of these cabs there are two: the one runs at fixed times up and down again and accommodates all comers, the other runs "special" when required by any one of the principal officials. Through the shops themselves there is laid in all directions a miniature railway with a gauge of 16 inches, along which tiny engines, scarcely bigger than a large model, the "Topsy," the "Pet," and the "Midge," dart incessantly hither and thither with their mimic loads.

To describe Crewe Works in detail is an obvious impossibility. The North-Western Railway is a kingdom in itself, dependent on the outside world for but few of the necessities of life. The Manager can think of nothing of importance that is imported in a manufactured state, except copper tubes for locomotive boilers. As we pass from shop to shop, here may be seen a steel canal-boat in process of construction (for the Company, it must be remembered, is a great canal proprietor); there, a lattice-work bridge is being fitted together. Further on, hydraulic pumps, cranes and capstans crowd a huge shed. In another place chains of all sorts and sizes, from cables to harness traces, are

being forged by the ton ; close by, coal-scuttles and lamps are being turned out by the hundred. In all the works there is no stranger sight than a corner in the carpenter's shop, where two men are constantly employed making artificial limbs. Some eighteen months back the Company embarked on this branch of manufacture, and undertook to supply a leg or an arm of the most finished workmanship to any man who was injured in their service. The limbs turned out would do credit to one of the great London instrument-makers. Fortunately, thanks to greater care and better appliances, shunting-poles more especially, accidents are far less frequent than they used to be, and the artificers are chiefly occupied in keeping up repairs. As corporations are commonly reputed to have no souls, it may perhaps be mentioned that, though of course there is no legal obligation on them to do so, the leading railway companies at least make it a rule to find or to create a permanent post in their employ for every man who has had the misfortune to be disabled in their service.

But we must not linger longer over *hors d'œuvres* such as bridges and cables, but must get on to the *pièces de resistance*. Let us go first into the rail-mill. The North-Western alone among English companies rolls its own rails, and not a little hostility it incurs (especially in times of slack trade) among the private manufacturers by doing so. As we enter, the Bessemer converter has just been charged, and we can watch how, in the fierce blast, the iron is turned to steel, with a storm of sound and a splendour of flame that must surely have suggested to Mr. Rider Haggard the weird transformation scene of "She." After the lapse of a few minutes the steel is poured out into moulds, each mould containing an ingot some three feet long and ten inches square. Beside the converters stands a machine which breaks up old rails in the same manner as a man snaps a stick across his knee, and with as little apparent effort. As soon as the ingot has cooled sufficiently to leave the mould, it is taken to a furnace and re-heated. It is then passed rapidly backwards and forwards through a series of swiftly-revolving rollers, each successive pair of rollers being closer together than the preceding pair. After two or three passages in each direction the ingot has become a bar. The process continues, the bar becomes longer and thinner ; the rollers are now no longer plain but grooved ; the top and bottom of the bar flatten out, the sides simultaneously belly in, and in forty seconds, during which the blinding



white of the metal has faded to a dull red, the rolling is complete and the rail finished. Before, however, it is finally laid aside to cool, it is dragged to a saw which cuts it off to the standard length of thirty feet, next to a plane which trims up and squares the ends, and lastly to a third machine which, with a nudge here and a push there, straightens out even the most imperceptible bend.

Alongside, steel sleepers, one of the latest and not the least ingenious of Mr. Webb's numerous patents, are being rolled out by somewhat similar machinery, and steel chairs are being stamped out of the "crop ends" of the rails, under the blows of a Nasmyth's hammer. The chairs are formed of three pieces, riveted to one another and to the sleeper with six rivets apiece, which are forced through the holes and pressed out into heads by hydraulic power as easily and quickly as a dairymaid presses out pats of butter. The system is completed by steel springs, which take the place of the ordinary oak wedge or "key" which fixes the rail tight into the chair. About 60,000 of these sleepers have so far been made, and about thirty miles of the North-Western line are laid with them. It is too soon yet to speak of results, but so far at least they seem to be successful. It is commonly supposed that steel sleepers would make the road less elastic and the vibration and jar of the carriages more perceptible, but the present writer can say from personal experience that neither in the carriage nor indeed on the engine of an express train could he perceive any difference, even though he knew he was passing over them. Experienced officials, however, say that they believe they can detect it when their attention is specially directed to the matter. We shall have occasion shortly to notice the marvellous capacity of trained railway men to feel their way along the road, so to speak, by sound. The question involved in the conflict between steel and wooden sleepers is literally one of gigantic magnitude. A rough calculation shows that to replace the wooden sleepers on existing lines in Great Britain would require about 4,000,000 tons of steel, without reckoning the weight of the chairs and keys. And Great Britain has only one-fifteenth of the railway mileage of the world. The adoption of steel sleepers might well postpone the destruction of the American forests for another generation.

The Crewe locomotive shops have to keep in repair a stock of engines that is worth £5,000,000 sterling, and that while it does not indeed put a girdle round the earth every forty minutes,

literally does so every four hours. In maintaining this stock, every five days a worn-out engine is withdrawn and replaced by a new one. But the locomotive shops have been described often enough. Of the boiler-shop, where he noticed one man at work riveting inside a fire-box, while two lusty mates hammered outside, Sir Francis Head in 1849 wrote as follows: "We could not help thinking that if there should happen to exist on earth any man ungallant enough to complain of the occasional admonition of a female tongue, if he will only go by rail to Crewe and sit in that boiler-shop for half an hour, he will most surely never again complain of the chirping of that 'cricket on the hearth,' the whispering curtain lectures of his *dulce domum*." We saw (and heard) no reason to suppose that the boiler-shop had become more silent since the date of Sir Francis Head's visit.

But Sir Francis saw nothing of what is nowadays perhaps the most interesting thing at Crewe, the compound locomotive. Still, it was only the year after his visit, long before the compound marine engine had ever been dreamed of, that an engine-driver on the Great Eastern Railway, Mr. John Nicholson by name, suggested a form of compound locomotive. Two engines were built on his design, and yielded highly satisfactory results. We shall hope to trace the descent of Mr. Nicholson's idea in a subsequent article; meanwhile we must confine ourselves to Mr. Webb, who in 1881 struck out a new line of his own, and patented a form of engine with two small high-pressure cylinders and a third low-pressure one, twenty-six inches in diameter, placed between the front wheels. The engine was appropriately named the "Experiment." The result Mr. Webb must tell in his own words. "Before it was painted he hooked it on [at Crewe] to assist a heavy express from Liverpool with nineteen coaches. He tried it with steam shut off from the other engine for some distance along the Trent Valley. They ran without trouble from Crewe to London. When the engine arrived in London it was all right, and he had it turned round and hooked it to the morning mail which it took to Holyhead. When the engine arrived at Holyhead it was still all right, and he then gave the men something to eat, turned the engine round and hooked it to the boat express which it took to Crewe. The engine thus did 528 miles as a christening trip." The "Experiment" was so successful that it was followed by the "Economist" and numerous others. The "Compound," a more powerful engine with larger cylinders and slightly smaller wheels, began its career by drawing

the 10 o'clock Scotch express with a heavy load straight away from London to Carlisle. At the foot of Shap Fell, with its gradient of 1 in 75 for five miles, it paused for one moment disdainfully to refuse the assistance of the "bank" engine that was in waiting according to custom to help the train up the incline, and then pursued unaided its victorious career.

Since that time the Crewe shops have turned out upwards of seventy compounds. One of the latest and largest, belonging to what is known to the officials as the "Dreadnought" class and to drivers as "Jumbos," took Her Majesty to Scotland last summer, and drew the fifteen saloons of the royal train up Shap without assistance. Another, the "Marchioness of Stafford," which was exhibited in a conspicuous position in the "Inventories" in 1885, and gained for its inventor a gold medal, ran through to Carlisle one night in July with no less than "twenty-one coaches on the Limited Mail," and even with this load was going fifteen miles an hour when "she" reached Shap Summit. A "Jubilee" engine, "No. 3000," which in size and power eclipsed even the "Jumbos," which, moreover, is to work with steam at a pressure of 180 lbs., was, as we have already mentioned, built last summer. But the type may now be taken as settled. It has lately been adopted also for goods engines, and a specimen of this latter kind was in view in the recent Manchester Exhibition. Engines constructed on the Webb principle are already working on numerous foreign and Colonial lines, and one is now ordered for the United States, to undergo a series of trials on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The advantages claimed for the invention,—and rightly claimed, to judge by the experience of some seven or eight million miles running on the North-Western—are twofold. On the one hand, the compound engine is considerably more powerful than the ordinary engine of the same weight. As we have seen, it can take up steep inclines loads that had never hitherto been attempted without a second or "pilot" engine. Secondly, there is a marked economy of fuel, amounting to about 6 lbs. per mile. This to lay ears may sound a trifle, but when we learn that the North-Western Railway runs 40,000,000 miles per annum and pays a yearly coal bill of not far short of £300,000, we may perceive that a reduction of the consumption of coal from 36 to 30 lbs. per mile would be to the shareholders by no means a trifle. It ought to be mentioned that compound engines are not without their detractors, who number amongst

them some of the foremost engineers in the country. The opposition argument takes two forms. There is a theoretic objection which says that a locomotive has no time to use its steam expansively in the quarter of a second which elapses between one stroke of the piston and the next. The practical objection says, the compound engine has more parts and is more complicated. It is, therefore, more costly to build and to keep in repair, more liable to get out of order, and in any case more extravagant in the consumption of oil and tallow. Further, the heavier pressure of steam that the compound system implies means greater wear and tear of boilers, and more rapid destruction of the fire-box and the boiler tubes. All these extra expenses more than overbalance the value of the alleged saving in coal. In such a contest it would obviously be absurd for outsiders to intervene. Mr. Webb would no doubt answer, "*solvitur ambulando*," or rather "*currendo*."

There are three methods of getting to Crewe, all of them more interesting than the usual method of travelling in an ordinary compartment. These are, to ride on the engine, in the sorting-vans of the newspaper train, or in the Post Office vans of the special mail that leaves Euston every night at 8.30 P.M. At the same time it must be confessed that even the unfailing courtesy of the North-Western officials would not enable them to place any one of these three modes of travelling at the disposal of any considerable section of the public at large, so perhaps it may be worth while to describe them in somewhat more detail.

Fifty years ago, a place on the foot-plate of an engine was looked upon much like the box seat of a stage coach. A well-known passenger could have it for the asking, and half-a-crown would probably secure it for a stranger at any time. A veteran driver, familiarly known as "Billy" Smith, who from 1836 till April, 1887, drove an engine in the service of what is now the North-Eastern Company, recorded a month or two back in the columns of a railway newspaper that "when he first got married it was no unusual thing for his wife to go with him on the engine to Shields for marketing purposes." But nowadays, the driver who admitted any person on to the engine, without the written authority of the locomotive superintendent, would think himself very lucky, and would need to have a very irreproachable character, to escape with nothing worse than a fine of a sovereign. Nor can it be denied that the rule is rightly

made stringent. Whatever may be the case elsewhere, on the foot-plate at least three is an awkward number. But this is by no means the only objection. An accident is at any moment within the bounds of possibility, and the engine-driver who, if he was in fault, refrained from asserting that the most innocent of passengers had distracted his attention, would be more than human. Nor could his statement be disproved. "Ask me anything but that," has been the answer of more than one General Manager to our request to be allowed to travel on the engine of some famous express. "We don't like to be told by the papers," added one of these gentlemen, "that we are coolly indifferent to human life."

This charge indeed, though often made, is not more cruelly unjust than it is foolish. There is no need to see the shudder with which an undemonstrative, hard-headed railway official will speak of some accident, that happened years ago perhaps, in order to realize that the man who has actually seen the mangled bodies of the dead and heard the groans of the dying is likely to be at least as much affected as the gentleman who, sitting at home at ease, reads the account in his morning's *Times*. Granted, however, that the railway profession were (as Macaulay describes Charles's Court) a "paradise of cold hearts," it can hardly be said also to be one of "narrow minds." And the Manager who does not know that an accident is enormously costly, not only in the damage it causes and the compensation it implies (the Hexthorpe collision is said to be likely to cost the Sheffield Company £100,000), but still more in the loss of the traffic which it frightens away—that Manager must undeniably know less of his own business than the meanest porter's boy. But we have waited an unconscionable time to join the engine for which we have been fortunate enough to secure a pass.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes us, after we have got over the sensation of being as much too hot on the one side as we are too cold on the other, and have ceased to notice the hardness and still more the greasiness of our seat, is that the North-Western Railway runs across a desert. Sitting in a carriage and looking out of the window on either side, one seems to be travelling through green fields and pleasant parks and pastures. But rushing through the air fifty miles an hour on the engine, one is forced by an irresistible fascination to strain one's eyes gazing forward through the windows of the "cab";



and through them nothing is visible but the great broad gravel highway with its eight gleaming lines of polished steel stretching onward and ever onward before us. It is true that here we overtake a caravan toiling northwards on the "slow" line, there we meet a second wending its way south, but they are only seen one moment to be lost sight of the next. Anon we dash with a roar and a rattle through a station, or scatter before our rush a group of platelayers; but these points are only rare oases along our track.

An hour after leaving Willesden we speed through Wolverton, a station that has fallen from its high estate of forty years ago, when every train, from the Birmingham express and the York mail to the humble Parliamentary, stopped for ten minutes at the famous refreshment-rooms. Gone are the "seven very young ladies to wait upon the passengers" in whose praise Sir Francis Head waxed so eloquent; gone the "eighty-five pigs and piglings, impartially promoted one after another by seniority into an infinite number of pork pies"; eaten the last of the 182,500 Banbury cakes, the 56,940 Queen's cakes, the 29,200 pâtés—though on this latter point we are not quite so sure, as we saw what may have been a survival of the eocene epoch of railway travel on a station buffet not long since.\* But this matters little to us at this moment; a touch of the driver's whistle and the station disappears in the distance before we have had time to more than catch a glimpse of the great carriage works. A minute or so later the driver makes signs to us—the noise of the train and the fury of the wind as we hurry through the air at the rate of 50 miles an hour render speech impossible—to move from the right-hand side, where we have been standing out of the way of the fireman's busily-plied shovel, to the left. The engine is about to take in water. The driver lowers the scoop down from the tender into the troughs between the rails, the fireman stands ready to turn on the tap into the water-tank, we hear a hollow sound as the iron of the trough rings beneath our feet, then a rush of water, ten seconds more the water is splashing up against the top of the tank, the tap is turned off even more hastily than

\* It is worth mention as a proof of the change of social habits, that Sir Francis gives a table of the consumption of seven different kinds of alcoholic drink, ranging in quantity from 45,000 bottles of stout to 464 bottles of rum. Whiskey is not so much as mentioned. It was, we believe, practically unknown in England, while even in Scotland, at least in the Lowlands, its use was entirely confined to the lower orders.

it was turned on, the scoop is drawn up, and we are speeding on our way with the water-troughs lying far behind us. The fireman does well to be prompt; cases have been known where he has neglected or failed to lift up the scoop in time, and the water has overflowed the tanks, flooded the tender, set pick and shovel and coals all afloat, and surging up against the fire-box door, gone near to putting the fire out altogether.

At Roade we part company with the "slow" lines, which turn off to the right, round through Northampton and skirting Althorpe Park. A few minutes later we are in the famous Kilsby Tunnel, and hurrying onward through the deafening roar and the gloom, weirdly illuminated with spasmodic gleams from our engine chimney. Before us—miles away it looks—lies a spot of blinding light, but when we reach it, it is nothing but the bottom of a ventilating shaft that opens right up to the sky above. A minute or two more, and passing under the down "slow" line that, regardless of cost, has been carried over our heads to avoid any risk of collision at the junction, passing too a signal-box, perhaps the largest in the world, 100 feet in length and containing nearly 200 levers, we slacken speed through the maze of signals into Rugby Station, and draw up at the platform, 89 minutes after leaving Willesden  $77\frac{1}{4}$  miles distant.

Perhaps to a stranger on an engine nothing is so remarkable as the signalling and the organization of the trains. A moment ago, that signal before us was, we know, at danger, a moment hence it will be at danger again, but at the present instant it gives "line clear," and through we dash unchecked; and so it will be mile after mile and hour after hour. Not many months since the present writer came up from Manchester to London on the eve of a Bank Holiday. There were a hundred and fifty-nine separate block sections to be crossed, each with its distant and its home signal. But of the whole three hundred and eighteen signals, only one was at danger, and that but for an instant. Even this struck the driver as something very unusual; such a thing, he said, had not happened to him for months as to have an express stopped by a signal against it.

From the Saturday afternoon before a Bank Holiday to the half-awakened solitude of Euston at 5 A.M., the transition is abrupt. But the silence and solitude does not last long. A rumbling of heavy wheels driven at speed is heard, and big spring vans dash up, piled with papers reeking hot from the

press. Bundle after bundle is tossed into the foremost of the sorting vans, of which there are three joined together with gangways opening between. Of passenger carriages on the train there are two, but the passengers might be counted on one's fingers. The clock points to twelve minutes past the hour, the papers are all in the train, but the chief sorting clerk looks anxiously at the clock, and then out into the station yard. The *Times*, we learn, does not come with the other papers from the office in the Strand, but is sent direct from Printing House Square, and it has not yet arrived. The minute hand reaches the quarter, time waits for no man, not even for the Editor of the *Times*; the guard blows his whistle, we step in, and the train moves off. At the same moment is heard a "rushing of horse hoofs from the east," the train is stopped before it has gone twenty yards, the van gallops into the yard, and every official in the place, from the inspector and the sorting clerks to the lamp-man, precipitates himself upon it, before there has been time to pull the horses on to their haunches. In less time than it takes to describe, the bundles of papers are transferred, and by 5.17 we are again under weigh, having been lucky enough to see a sight that we are assured has never before been seen by mortal eyes.

No sooner are we started than folding counters are fixed up along the sides of the vans and the sorting begins. In the front van the bundles are reduced to manageable size, the reams of *Standards* or *Telegraphs* split up into quires or dozens. In the second van the parcels are made up for each place, so many *Times*, *News*, or *Post*, so many odds and ends, weeklies, evening papers of the night before, and so on till the whole of the requisitions of each list are complied with. Then the finished parcel is handed on into the third van, where are two servants of the Company who receive it, weigh it, enter it in a way bill, and debit the cost of carriage to Messrs. W. H. Smith's account.

We took down with us in the sorting vans in all between thirty and forty thousand copies of the morning papers, and as our journey was on a Tuesday morning we took little else. The work gets heavier as the week gets older. Monday, when no weeklies are published, is the lightest of all. Tuesday, the society papers begin with the *World*. Wednesday come *Truth* and *Punch*, and the rest of the comic journals; till finally on Saturday the multitude is almost overwhelming. The sorting vans go no

further north than Stafford,\* and long before this point is reached, huge bundles have been turned out at Northampton and at Rugby, for Leamington, Coventry, Birmingham and its neighbourhood. If at Stafford the work is still unfinished, the Shrewsbury train has to wait till the sorting of the newspapers for the Welsh lines has been completed in a siding. But on this particular morning the work was accomplished well within the time, and we were able to study the political leanings of the different towns at our leisure.

When, thirty-eight years ago, Sir Francis Head wrote the description of the North-Western Railway from which we have already quoted, among the things that especially impressed him, he mentioned the large and spacious carriage and waggon shops that occupied what was then known as "The Field" at Euston. The shops have long disappeared, crowded out by the ever-increasing traffic, which is now so far in excess of the accommodation, that in the height of summer there is no room even to marshal and make up the trains, or to wash and sweep out the carriages, and, in spite of the fact that one of what should be the four running lines out of the station has been taken possession of as a siding, trains have to run the eleven miles to Willesden Junction and back to perform their toilette. In the first week of August, when the daily number of saloons on the Scotch trains may be counted by the dozen and the number of sleeping-berths by the hundred, this toilette is no small matter, and the laundry at Willesden, where sheets and towels and so forth are washed, has to work double tides.

The Company have lately bought enough ground adjoining Euston to enable them to double the area of the present station. A considerable portion of the site was formerly a churchyard, which was used for burials from the year 1620 down to as recently as 1859. The whole of this cemetery to a depth of fifteen feet has now been bodily (we have no wish to jest on such a subject, but the word is indispensable) removed to Finchley. All the time this operation was being carried on by the contractor, a doctor and an inspector were constantly present at either end on behalf of the Company, to see that nothing was done which might offend against either due reverence for the dead or due regard for the health of the living.

Meanwhile the traffic has to be worked as best it may with the

\* Since the above was written, the newspaper vans have commenced running through to Crewe, instead of stopping at Stafford.

existing accommodation, and however severe the strain may be, probably there are not many even of the most experienced travellers who could truthfully assert that they ever saw the station staff at Euston in a flurry, or ever knew a train steam away from the platform a moment after time. At 6.30 P.M. the work of the evening commences with the Dublin North Wall boat train. Five minutes later it is followed by a special horse and carriage train which picks up *en route* saloons and engaged carriages for the Highlands, and so relieves the later trains. From 6.35 to 7.55 there is a lull, interrupted only by the Birmingham express at 7 and a local train at 7.10. But then the rush comes fast and furious. The 7.55 runs through unbroken, and with its occupants undisturbed by a single passenger getting out or in all the way from London to Stirling. Eight o'clock sees another Scotch express off, this time for Glasgow, Greenock and Stranraer, as well as for the Highlands. Then, after twenty minutes' breathing space, goes the "Wild Irishman" for Holyhead, and Kingstown.<sup>2</sup> And now our own time is running short, for we are going down by the 8.30 postal train, the only mail train pure and simple in the world as far as we are aware. But we have time to notice the 8.40, known as the "Old Limited," another special for the Highlands only, whose passengers, *sua si bona norint*, would be even more numerous than they are. For in the working instructions in reference to this train is a welcome order: "Perfect quiet must be kept at all stations where this train stops." At 8.50 goes the "Limited," shorn now of its former greatness, since it admits an unlimited number of third-class passengers, but making up in quantity what it lacks in quality, as it is probably nowadays one of the heaviest expresses in the world, and runs between Preston and Carstairs with somewhere about 20 coaches each morning. At nine o'clock follows the Birmingham express, with parcel vans in addition for Manchester, Liverpool and Carlisle. At ten comes the last of the true Scotch expresses, bringing the supplementary mails for Aberdeen, and carrying in addition parcel-sorting vans for Holyhead and Merthyr, and so serving off this train almost the whole of Wales.

But long ere this we have betaken ourselves from the glare and bustle of the departure platforms to "No. 1 arrival," where beneath the dim light of the half turned-down gas, huge red post-office vans are disgorging their contents in sacks and hampers into the yet huger sorting tenders of the postal train.



Entrusting our bag to the guard, who is not a little startled at the sight of a mere passenger, we step on board and present to the travelling superintendent a permit with a dignified seal attached that authorizes our audacious invasion of his domains. The vans have no sooner discharged their contents than they move off, and by the time we are due to start and the guard blows his whistle, the platform is well-nigh deserted; the *nonchalance* with which the few officials who remain turn their backs on us as we steam out, forming an amusing contrast to the *empressement* of the porters and ticket-collectors, and the frantic shaking of hands and waving of handkerchiefs of which we had just been witnesses on the further side. We had expected (remembering that till quite recently the mails were run on a passenger train) to find the postal train a small one. But this was far from being the case, as it consisted of nine vehicles (reckoned in the guard's journal as 12½) with a total length of fully 150 yards. The Company sent a parcel van for Manchester and a break at either end, but the rest of the train was composed of post-office vehicles through which there ran a continuous passage.

In front were two parcel vans, the one for Edinburgh, the other for Aberdeen, in which men were sorting from and into huge hampers the parcels that had been roughly grouped by districts at the London receiving offices. In the rear of the train was a similar van for the Glasgow parcels. In all we had "on board" about 3000 parcels in 100 hampers and packages. On the whole the parcel sorters had a comparatively easy time of it. It is true that occasionally a parcel would give a good deal of trouble. We had one, for instance, for Port Hamilton that caused great searchings of heart, as it was only stamped at the inland rate. One man thought Port Hamilton was in Newfoundland, a second was almost sure it was in the Baltic, at least he knew there had been some talk about it recently in which the Russians were mixed up. Finally the superintendent decided that the parcel should go to Liverpool, and that the authorities there should adjudicate upon its ultimate fate. But the train only stopped at Rugby and at Tamworth all the way from Euston to Crewe, so the parcels to be dealt with were a finite quantity, and if those to go out at Rugby were ready by the time the train reached Blisworth, the sorters could sit down and rest for twenty minutes.

The labour of the letter sorters, on the other hand, was like:

existing accommodation, and however severe the strain may be, probably there are not many even of the most experienced travellers who could truthfully assert that they ever saw the station staff at Euston in a flurry, or ever knew a train steam away from the platform a moment after time. At 6.30 P.M. the work of the evening commences with the Dublin North Wall boat train. Five minutes later it is followed by a special horse and carriage train which picks up *en route* saloons and engaged carriages for the Highlands, and so relieves the later trains. From 6.35 to 7.55 there is a lull, interrupted only by the Birmingham express at 7 and a local train at 7.10. But then the rush comes fast and furious. The 7.55 runs through unbroken, and with its occupants undisturbed by a single passenger getting out or in all the way from London to Stirling. Eight o'clock sees another Scotch express off, this time for Glasgow, Greenock and Stranraer, as well as for the Highlands. Then, after twenty minutes' breathing space, goes the "Wild Irishman" for Holyhead, and Kingstown.<sup>2</sup> And now our own time is running short, for we are going down by the 8.30 postal train, the only mail train pure and simple in the world as far as we are aware. But we have time to notice the 8.40, known as the "Old Limited," another special for the Highlands only, whose passengers, *sua si bona norint*, would be even more numerous than they are. For in the working instructions in reference to this train is a welcome order: "Perfect quiet must be kept at all stations where this train stops." At 8.50 goes the "Limited," shorn now of its former greatness, since it admits an unlimited number of third-class passengers, but making up in quantity what it lacks in quality, as it is probably nowadays one of the heaviest expresses in the world, and runs between Preston and Carstairs with somewhere about 20 coaches each morning. At nine o'clock follows the Birmingham express, with parcel vans in addition for Manchester, Liverpool and Carlisle. At ten comes the last of the true Scotch expresses, bringing the supplementary mails for Aberdeen, and carrying in addition parcel-sorting vans for Holyhead and Merthyr, and so serving off this train almost the whole of Wales.

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that of the Danaids, as the letters poured in and out all the way in a never-ending stream. In the middle of the train were three letter vans. In the centre one was worked the "apparatus" which took in and put out the letters. On either side was a sorting van, the one going through to Aberdeen, the other to Glasgow. Hardly had we got clear of London, when at Harrow we received our first consignment of letters. As we approached the station the official in charge of the apparatus drew back a sliding panel on the left hand side of the carriage. Then with a lever (not unlike a signal lever) placed lengthways of the train, he thrusts out at right angles an arm with a net attached that had hitherto been lying tight folded against the side. The motion of the lever sets an electric gong ringing furiously, and warns all concerned that the net is out and it is not safe to attempt to pass across the opening till the letters have been received. Crash! a shower of sparks flies from the iron arm, the train seems for a second to reel from the shock. Bang! and a great leathern bundle, or "pouch" as it is technically termed, falls with a dull thud upon the floor. Formerly the pouch remained in the net and had to be pulled in: no easy task, if, as is sometimes the case, four or five were taken in at one station. Latterly, by a recent improvement in the apparatus (which, after forty years' progress towards perfection, now seems to leave little further to be desired), the net catches the pouches obliquely, and then the force of the collision causes them to rebound off it straight into the carriage. The present writer was standing and watching the operation within a few feet of the opening. "You had better," said the official, "move a little further forward; it was only a week or two back that a pouch flew up and broke the lamp glass just over your head." We obeyed without discussion.

Certainly if any one wishes, without experiencing one, to know what a collision at fifty miles an hour means, he should feel the shock caused by four pouches weighing perhaps two-hundredweight, and then imagine what it would be if that were multiplied by 2000 to arrive at the weight of an ordinary train. The pouches are of the thickest and toughest hide, bound round with straps hardly slighter than the traces of a set of carriage-harness, and they are suspended to the post whence the net sweeps them off with fastenings of iron as thick as a man's finger. And yet scarcely a night passes in which three or four pouches are not crippled, the iron snapt short off, or the buckles

of the straps torn right out of the stitching. Mails are put out much the same way as they are taken in. They are wrapped up in a pouch and hung out from an arm on a level with the footboard of the carriage and caught by a net only a foot or two above the level of the ground. At many stations bags are put out and taken in simultaneously.

"But how," we asked—and our readers will, we fancy, be inclined to ask the same question—"do you know in a pitch-dark night, possibly in a dense fog, when it is time to let down your apparatus?" The answer was that everything was done not by sight but by sound. With a thorough knowledge of the ground and of the speed of the train, a practised ear can tell at any moment what point has been reached. The hollow reverberation of the water-troughs between Pinner and Bushey no one could fail to recognize. North of Watford a tunnel forms the "mark" for Tring; approaching Nuneaton the "mark" is unmistakeable. We have hardly passed through an arch under a wide road-way, when a bridge over the canal rings under our wheels, then comes the echo of another arch above us. Down goes the net, and in come tumbling the Leicester and Coventry and Nuneaton bags. Not long since these same Coventry bags caused no small trouble to the Post Office authorities. The Coventry watch-makers send watches all over the country in registered letters, and the rough shock of the apparatus was found somewhat trying to their tender constitutions. The rule has accordingly now been established that no packet marked "fragile" shall be sent in mails picked up by the travelling offices.

The pouches are no sooner on board than they are hastily opened, the bags extracted and unsealed, and their contents transferred to the sorters in the adjoining carriages. A travelling sorter, besides the quickness of hand and eye and the knowledge of geography that the ordinary sorter needs, requires to have a special knowledge of the working of the train. Otherwise he would be apt to be puzzled if, as he was hurrying northwards fifty miles an hour between Rugby and Stafford, he was presented with a batch of letters just taken on board for stations lying south of Rugby. Or, again, he might well ask why he was troubled with Dublin and Belfast letters, when the Irish mail was careering along seven or eight miles in front over the same metals. Or he might wonder how letters for Norwich or Bristol came his way. But all his difficulties would be got over when he came to learn how the service fitted together and inter-



changed with other mails, till he would gradually find that the superintendent's boast was a true one, and that there was hardly a place in England north of the Thames that could not be served off this single train.

We reach Tamworth at 10.56, and there from the Midland line, which at this point passes over our heads, we take in hamper after hamper of parcels, and sack after sack of mails, which Midland trains have brought from Plymouth and Bristol on the one side, and from Lincolnshire and the Eastern Counties on the other. "What about the Birmingham mails?" we ask, as half an hour later we whiz through Stafford without slackening speed. At Crewe we learn the answer. The "Irishman" has picked up the Birmingham bags, and is waiting at Crewe to transfer them to us, and to receive from us in return all the Irish and North Wales letters that we have collected and sorted on our way down. The postal train, after putting out the London letters which it has received by means of the apparatus, to be called for in an hour by the up mail, and also its Manchester mails, proceeds on its way north to Preston and Carlisle. We have then to make acquaintance with a train, which, though at present standing humbly on a siding, is undoubtedly one of the most highly-connected trains in England. Starting from Holyhead it has brought mails flowing in from every small stream in Wales, to empty them into the great reservoir at Crewe. From Crewe it will start again, not only with mails from every part of England, Wales, and Scotland, for Manchester, Sheffield, and the Yorkshire towns, but also with the proud burden of a special "sausage van from Dudley to Leeds." To trace its progress across the maze of lines, through Lancashire and the West Riding, would require an article to itself. Sufficient, that at 2.28 A.M. it finally expires at Normanton in the arms of the North Eastern, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the Midland.

Next month we hope to say something of the working of the goods trains, and to sketch the scarcely less elaborate method in which the produce of the country, and indeed of the world, is concentrated on to the great highway leading from Rugby to the Metropolis.

W. M. ACWORTH

(To be continued.)

## New Year's Bells.



### I.

OUT in the night  
The bells are ringing,  
Sweet melodies flinging  
Far away, far as a dream's delight ;  
The frosty stars are burning bright,  
The waters beneath are faintly white  
And all is still,  
Save the dropping sweetness of chiming bells,  
Save the mellow charm of their mingling spells  
Over valley and hill ;  
Till the wind hurries each lone sound as it floats,  
Steadily fall the golden notes  
And the spirit with strangest tumult fill,  
That is not pain  
Or joy, but the binding of a chain.

### II.

How the music sweeps  
With the rising blast over heathy swells !  
In wooded dells  
How it sinks and sleeps !  
Every tower from far and near  
Is pouring its melody strong and clear ;  
Here in the clefts of windy downs,  
Here from the spires of murmurous towns ;  
From a thousand throats  
Of metal aloft  
The gathering tide of music floats  
Over copse and croft,

And over the bleak and barren wold  
To the hamlets hid in the mountain's fold,  
Till the air is filled with tremulous sound  
And the spirits of song are all unbound.

## III.

But, sudden and swift  
The chimes are still ;  
The echo dies in the farthest clift  
And silence comes with an awful thrill ;  
The Earth is bound  
In a hush profound ;  
Scarce the falling streamlets plash,  
Scarcely the stars in the heavens flash,—  
For over the world sweeps an icy breath,  
'Tis the blast of Death—  
The faint year speeds to his viewless goal,  
To the myriads writ on Time's long scroll,  
And the heart of man beats low with dread  
As he takes a last look at the face of the dead ;  
With heavy dole  
The deep bells toll,  
They mourn for the gentle spirit fled.

## IV.

For the year was good.—  
Though the robes he brought to the forest are shed  
And all his flowers long witherèd,  
Though his sighs are hushed in the leafless wood  
With the pleasant song  
He brought when the sunny days were long,  
Though his golden eves and dewy dawns  
Are quenched in the darkness, dense and strong,  
That under his cold feet deeply yawns,  
Yet his garnered grain  
And his fruits remain,  
With the words he spake to the listening heart,  
Yet the music lives mute in the wild bird's breast  
To break one day its charmed rest,  
When another spring into being shall start—  
Oh ! the year was good !

## V.

But hark! the bells  
In tumultuous swells  
Peal over forest and hill and dale,  
From a thousand spires,  
Like the quivering wires  
Of Life's great harp, which the hand of Time  
Sweeps in a strong heart-stirring chime ;  
The stars, which sail  
In majesty over the heavens wide,  
Shake in the music's mighty tide.  
The vast sea stirs in the midnight gloom  
Scarcely touched by the lustre pale,  
When the young year leaps from Eternity's womb,  
Lusty and fresh and full of joy,  
With never a trace of sorrow or sin ;  
Welcome the bright, the beautiful boy,  
Welcome him joyously, thankfully in !

## VI.

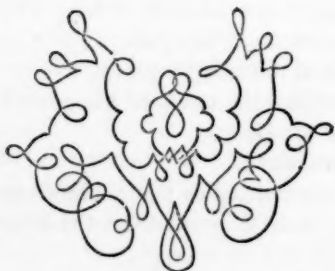
In a deepening tide  
The music is swelling, far and wide,  
Over furze-grown knolls  
Like a billow it rolls ;  
Now, like a shower of fiery gems,  
It breaks as it falls through the forest stems ;  
It rises and rings through the murmurous street  
With an eddy of voices and lingering feet ;  
And over the sea,  
Where the fisher leans from his lonely bark,  
He hears through the dark  
The rush of mingling melody,  
It peals round the eaves of his quiet home,  
It breaks the sleep,  
Secure and deep,  
Of his innocent babes who wake to see  
The stars look in peace from the heavenly dome.

## VII.

Ring on ! ring on !  
Peal the birth-song far and wide !  
For the Old is gone,  
Is swept in the swift unresting tide

Flowing to Lethe's waters dun,  
And with him hates and scorns and fears,  
Regrets and tears,  
And things that darken the shining sun.  
Chime, happy bells,  
Fill the airs with merry madness,  
Make us deaf to thoughts of sadness,  
Weave us myriad airy spells,  
Spirits that wait on the bright-eyed boy,  
To hide the shadows that lurk behind,  
The shapes that loom  
Dread and dim in the distant gloom !  
Ring, golden bells,  
Into the soul of the pausing wind,  
Ring fullest strains of passionate joy,  
Till hearts are blind  
To sorrow and care and all annoy !  
For the New is born,  
He promises fair, he is fresh and sweet,  
High resolves his brow adorn,  
Round him visioned glories glow,  
They gild his robe of stainless snow,  
Flowers are springing beneath his feet,  
And he smiles in the light of a hopeful morn.

MAXWELL GRAY.





## The Royal Irish Constabulary;

THEIR ORIGIN, ORGANIZATION, AND GENERAL CHARACTER.

NOT for many years has there been greater necessity than at the present time for consistent, firm, yet cautious action in dealing with the elements of disorder which are but too evident in our midst ; nor ever a time when there was more absolute necessity for all who have a stake in the country, or who have a regard for order as against disorder, to stand together to support and encourage, as every citizen more or less can do, the constitutional forces which, under whatever Government is in power, have to contend against lawlessness and crime. Every man who has home, honour, property, or relatives to lose would, if his country was invaded by a foreign enemy, risk his life in their defence, and he must also remember that there are other invasions to be feared from within quite as dangerous, which can only be met by all loyal citizens combining to give to these forces the best moral support in their power.

Yet at such a time as this the persistent manner in which our police forces have been attacked, and the forces of disorder thereby encouraged, not only by those who we may always expect to find in antagonism to every Government, but by men of high position in former Governments, English members of Parliament and others of education and standing in society, is a phenomenon in party strife as unprecedented as it is startling, and one which, if pursued as the legitimate policy of those in political opposition to the Government of the day, must prove ruinous to the best interests of this country. The different forces of the State, the army, the navy, and the police, are each and all essential to its well-being, and, irrespective of what party is in power, must and do obey the authority of every Government alike. A tacit and honourable understanding has consequently hitherto existed to exempt them from the contentions of

party. It must be hoped that this understanding has only momentarily lapsed, and that the English love of fair play will not suffer it to be otherwise. It must, however, be observed that though the immense majority of the people in this kingdom do, as a rule, give willing support to the forces at the disposal of Governments, there is often shown too great a readiness to condemn unheard those who have failed or apparently failed to carry out what has been expected of them, too great an aptness to forget the difficulties with which they may have had to contend, and too much unmindfulness of the discouragement which such hasty and perhaps entirely undeserved blame causes to men who have at least endeavoured to perform their duty. As regards the police especially, is there not too great a tendency at certain times and in certain cases to express a hasty opinion that they have either exceeded or fallen short of their duty? Let the difficulties with which a policeman is beset, especially in times of popular excitement, not be forgotten. He is really always on duty and requires qualities which are not a necessity for the soldier or sailor, who when face to face with his enemies can scarcely go too far in exterminating them; he must have tact and good temper; and however strongly irritated, he must exercise self-control, judgment, and discretion; these qualities must be cultivated until they become a second nature, and if the strain upon his physical courage is at times great, that upon his moral courage is often greater. In dealing with mob violence for instance—and few who have not been personally opposed to such can imagine how trying it is not only to the temper but to the nerves of those who as a rule have good command over both—he must ever bear in mind that he is dealing with his fellow-citizens, that he will be held responsible for every action, and must be prepared to show that if on the one hand he has not exceeded his duty, he has on the other not fallen short of it; for in times of popular excitement it is too certain that endeavours will be made to cast blame upon him in both directions.

I now wish to speak more particularly of the police in Ireland, the force so well known as the Royal Irish Constabulary. There must be few persons in England who follow the events of the day in the newspapers who have not observed the bitter hostility lately shown towards them by the so-called National party; this hostility on their part is natural and must be expected, and their attacks need hardly be regarded as likely to injure the fair fame of the force, but it is a different matter when such

attacks are joined in by Englishmen of high position, and by the man who of all others must know the nature of the crimes which the police in certain counties in Ireland have daily and nightly, at the risk of their lives, to contend with.

Of all men that have been in power, Mr. Gladstone must best know the character of the force and the value of the good service which it has rendered to the State; one would therefore have naturally hoped and expected him to be the very last to asperse that character unless upon the most positive evidence. Nevertheless, in a recent public speech upon an important occasion, when alluding to the moonlight outrage in Clare, on the scene of which Head Constable Whelehan was murdered, he compared him and his men, who, for the purpose of detecting the criminals in the act, had made use of an informer, to four ruffians in the last century who conspired to induce two others to commit a capital crime. They were convicted, and sentenced by the judge to be put in the pillory, but, as the speaker went on to say, the sentence of the people was a good deal stronger than that of the judge, for one of them they actually put to death, and another they beat and maltreated within an inch of his life. Mr. Gladstone explained that he was not going to justify what was done by the people, but he stated his opinion that the two cases were closely analogous, and as his words are reported in the *Times* of the 19th October, that "the police substantially conspired after the manner of these four men." Stress was laid upon the fact that this informer was a man of bad character, but is that a reason why his information should not be made use of to detect villains such as commit these midnight murders and other diabolical outrages?

It is this terrible accusation, and the more terrible suggestion which would appear to arise out of the whole comparison, together with other unsupported charges made in the same speech against the R. I. Constabulary, and also frequently made by other men on public occasions with reference to cases still untried, which leads me to suppose that many who know little or nothing of Ireland may be putting to each other such questions as, Who are those Irish Constabulary who we read are thirsting for blood, who are wantonly shooting down and bludgeoning unoffending people, tempting unwary men to commit moonlight atrocities that shock the world, who conspire with informers to lay deadly traps for a peaceful and trusting peasantry? where are they raised? where do they escape to when their service is

completed? and I am induced by love for the force in which I am proud to have served, to put together as some answer to such inquiries a slight sketch of its origin, organization and general character, which may, I hope, be not altogether without interest at the present time.

The men who compose it are almost exclusively Irish, for the most part the sons of Irish farmers or tradesmen, drawn from all parts of the country, irrespective of creed. Catholics, Protestants and Presbyterians are equally welcome to its ranks, but perhaps the proportion of the first-named religion is about 73 per cent. of the total strength; they are all men who, before enrolment, must show that they possess a fair education, and whose character has been carefully inquired into; they enrol voluntarily and eagerly, and beyond the requirement of one month's notice, are under no obligation to remain. As a rule, they do remain for many years, marry Irish women, and when discharged settle in Ireland and possess the good will of the people. Physically, they are perhaps the finest body of men in the world; intellectually, they compare favourably with any other; as a force they are temperate in their habits, upright in their conduct, and of a kindly and generous nature. During their early training they are imbued with great *esprit de corps* and a very high sense of duty and discipline, and are consequently easily governed, but are very sensitive to any injustice or the appearance of it; and though, as has been said, they are wholly Irish, and in this sense a thoroughly national force, they have, in spite of temptation, and in spite of the threats which have been uttered against them should they ever come under the power of the present Nationalist party, remained loyal, and true to their duty.

To Mr. Drummond, Under-Secretary for Ireland, 1835-1840, is mainly due the credit of having created the force; it was first called "The Constabulary of Ireland." Previous to this there was no consolidated police force. In 1787 the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council had been empowered to establish districts, for each of which sixteen constables might be appointed by the Grand Jury, and one chief constable by the Lord Lieutenant; these were called "Barony constables," and were paid for out of the county cess. Five years later some further power was given to Grand Juries to appoint Barony constables, and in 1814 the Lord Lieutenant was empowered, with assent of the Privy Council, to proclaim any county or barony to be in a state of disturbance, upon which proclamation a very consider-

able extra force and chief constable might be appointed to the proclaimed district, and this force, though, like the "Barony constables," paid from the local rates, were distinguished from them by the title of "Peace Preservation Police." In 1822 the right of appointing the "Barony constables" was transferred from the Grand Jury to the County Magistrates, and an inspector for each province was appointed. This organization was however found unsatisfactory and quite inefficient to cope with the faction fights which were then so much in vogue; they were powerless to quell them, and were obliged to leave these tumultuous assemblages of several hundred persons to bludgeon each other without let or hindrance; it was consequently determined in Mr. Drummond's time, and it was a matter in which he would appear to have been the ruling spirit, to consolidate the "Barony constables" and the "Peace Preservation Police" into a single force, to be called the "Constabulary of Ireland," and to be controlled by one officer, to whom was given the title of Inspector-General; this officer was placed in direct communication with the Executive Government. Mr. Drummond was singularly fitted for the work he undertook, having some years before been engaged with Captain Colley in the survey of Ireland, and taken a deep interest in the people and all connected with the country; he had moreover wonderful aptitude for grasping details and great organizing ability.

Every appointment in the force from Inspector-General to constable was vested in the Lord Lieutenant, the whole cost of it was to be advanced from the Consolidated Fund, but one moiety to be recovered from the counties according to the number stationed in each, which was defined by the Act, but might be exceeded upon a representation by seven magistrates to the Lord Lieutenant; moreover, upon a county or barony being proclaimed he might appoint an "Additional Force," which was so designated. In 1839 a "Reserve Force" was established of two district inspectors,\* four head constables, and not over two hundred sergeants and constables chargeable in the same manner as the Consolidated Force; but in 1846 the provision for recovering one moiety from the counties was entirely repealed, and it was enacted that all necessary and reasonable costs, charges, and expenses of the Constabulary and Reserve should

\* To prevent confusion, I allude to these ranks throughout as district inspectors, sergeants, and constables. They were, however, designated as sub-inspectors, constables, and sub-constables, until changed by Act of Parliament in 1883.



be charged upon the Consolidated Fund, but the counties were as heretofore to repay a moiety of any "additional force" in a proclaimed district and a moiety of any part of the Reserve Force, of which the services might be called for; this concession was made by Sir R. Peel as compensation for the injury which it was supposed his commercial policy would inflict upon the agricultural interests of Ireland. At the same time the number of both the "Additional" and "Reserve" Forces was doubled; in 1847 the latter force was again increased, and its number brought up to six hundred men with the proportionate number of district inspectors and head constables, and the same Act authorized the Lord Lieutenant to appoint additional constabulary without limit to districts proclaimed under it. In 1857 the Revenue Police of Ireland, a force of one thousand two hundred men which existed under an Act of William IV., was abolished, and its duties given to the Constabulary, which was increased by four hundred men in consequence, a large pecuniary saving being effected by this arrangement. In 1865 a separate Extra Force was established for Belfast, and in 1870 a somewhat similar arrangement authorizing the addition of forty-five men was made for the city of Londonderry.

It will be observed by this statement that the total strength of the R. I. Constabulary is composed of several different forces authorized by different Acts of Parliament; this however for the most part only affects financial arrangements, and for every purpose of distribution, duty and discipline, they form but one force, subject to serve in any part of Ireland except the city of Dublin, which has its own police (the Dublin Metropolitan Police), also a Government force, composed of an exceptionally fine body of men commanded by a commissioner, who is appointed by the Lord Lieutenant; with this exception the R. I. Constabulary perform the whole police duty in Ireland. Although the Free Force, namely, that charged entirely upon the Consolidated Fund, is a fixed strength something under eleven thousand, the entire strength made up by extra forces as described is very fluctuating, chiefly dependent upon the state of the country. Not including officers and head constables, the present strength is about twelve thousand two hundred, whereas at the same period of 1882 it appears to have been about fourteen thousand two hundred; in 1848 it would appear to have been a little under twelve thousand five hundred.

The pay of a head constable ranges, according to his service,

from £91 to £104 per annum, that of a sergeant from about £75 to £80, and of a constable after allocation, from £54 to £70; if acting-sergeant, this highest rate of pay is slightly increased. Extra pay when absent on duty from station, when employed on special duty, &c., and allowances under different heads, such as travelling, boot-money, lodging allowance to married men, &c., are on a fairly liberal scale.

The officers of the force are supplied by two methods. First, selection from the rank of head constable, and where merit has been early conspicuous and has won early promotion to that rank, such men, being still young and unencumbered by large families, are among some of the best officers in the force. Secondly, and these form very considerably the larger proportion, are sons of gentlemen nominated by the Chief Secretary, or, the sons of officers serving or who have served in the force nominated by the Inspector-General. After nomination these candidates are obliged to pass a pretty severe Civil Service competitive examination. Those who succeed enter the force as cadets, and afterwards, if approved, are appointed to the rank of 3rd Class District Inspector,—and I may here say that officers of this class are called upon to perform duties as trying and responsible as if they were in the 1st Class of the rank, and that when allocated to their duties they have, as a rule, shown themselves fully deserving of the honourable position which they have succeeded in obtaining, and of the almost unlimited confidence which it is necessary to repose in their honour, discretion, and firmness of purpose, situated as they often are, in charge of the peace and with immediate command of the police, in some remote and troublesome district—charged also with large pecuniary responsibility. I know no position that a young man can hold in our public services where these qualities are more required, nor in which I honestly believe they have been more frequently or conspicuously shown than among the District Inspectors of the R.I. Constabulary. I have dwelt upon this because they are the men to whom we must look for the future of the force, the honour and discipline of which has to the present time been so well preserved by their seniors in the higher, but hardly more responsible, rank of County Inspector. The stricter system of selection now in force brings quicker promotion than formerly to that rank; and to those fortunate enough to obtain it, every higher position in the Force is open.

The present Inspector-General, Mr. Andrew Reed, was first appointed to the Force as District Inspector in 1859, County Inspector in 1879, Assistant Inspector-General in 1883, and having filled the office of Divisional Magistrate from 1883 to 1885 was appointed Inspector-General in that year. There is perhaps no officer who has been more thorough in his work in each grade, or who has so large a personal knowledge of the officers and men, or who is so entirely cognizant of its working in every branch. He graduated in the Dublin University, and is LL.D. and a Barrister-at-Law. Many of the young officers now in the force are also graduates of Dublin, Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The office of Inspector-General has hitherto, with one exception, been filled by military officers, amongst whom the two who were, I think, longest in the position and most identified with it, were the late General Sir Duncan McGregor, K.C.B., who filled it for twenty years, and the late Colonel Sir John Stewart Wood, K.C.B., for about eleven years. Sir Henry Brownrigg, C.B., a very able constabulary officer, who filled the position from 1858 to 1865, is the exception.

I must now say a few words about the R. I. Constabulary Depôt, which in 1843 superseded the separate Provincial Depôts which had previously existed. It is established in a handsome barrack well situated in the Phoenix Park. The staff consists of the Commandant, who is an Assistant Inspector-General of the force, a surgeon, veterinary surgeon, barrack master, adjutant, instructor of musketry, and police instructor; also a head constable, major, and the necessary staff of head constables, sergeants, drills, &c. The Depôt force is composed of such of the Reserve and mounted men as are not serving in counties, and of such men and officers as may be brought in for duty or instruction. There is altogether a force of about two hundred and thirty-six mounted men in the R. I. Constabulary. They perform escort, orderly, and patrol duties, and are very valuable in time of disturbance or riot in the larger towns. Some of them are stationed in these towns, and some, more or less as required, attached to every county headquarters. They are an exceedingly smart, well-mounted and well-equipped force.

The strength at the depôt is variable according to circumstances, but is always told off in four companies, to each of which a District Inspector is attached in charge. The mounted men form a troop in charge of the riding-master, who has the rank of District Inspector. An excellent band, the instruments provided

by subscriptions in the force, is also attached. Every recruit or newly-appointed officer remains on the strength of the *depôt* until he is certified as fit to take his duty in the country, or longer if necessary. The average time may be about six months. While at the *depôt* the greatest pains are taken with both young officers and recruits to instruct them in every branch of police duty, in drill and in the use of the arms (short-rifled, breech-loading Snider carbine with sword-bayonet), with which, in addition to the police truncheon, the whole force, except the mounted men, is armed. It would appear that from the time Peace Preservation Police first existed in Ireland, it has been considered necessary to arm them, not only for their own safety and that of their barracks and prisoners, but also to enable a small force to cope with, deter, and hold in fear the turbulent ; it is not, however, the practice to perform ordinary duties under arms ; nor even when sent in numbers to preserve the peace do the whole party go armed, the larger proportion carry the truncheon alone.

At the *depôt*, while all due attention is paid to their comfort, every recruit has constantly instilled into him habits of tidiness, personal cleanliness, good order, discipline and self-respect ; the daily duties, messing, &c., both as regards officers and men are carried out with the same regularity as in the barracks of any of our best regiments, and the barrack rooms are kept in the same scrupulously clean and tidy manner. It is to the excellent physical and moral training there carried out that I attribute to a great extent the high character which the force indisputably bears. Habits of good order and self-respect are there formed which afterwards, when the men are scattered all over the country, often far from effective supervision, are never lost.

The distribution of the force is as follows :—At the headquarters in Dublin the Inspector-General, Deputy Inspector-General and one Assistant Inspector-General, assisted by a very able and efficient, but not too large, Civil Service clerical staff, carry on the exceedingly heavy financial and administrative work of the central office.

One County Inspector is placed in charge of each county, and of each of the two *ridings* in the counties of Cork, Galway and Tipperary ; each county or *riding* is divided into so many police districts, varying from three to ten according to size, to each of which a District Inspector is appointed who has charge of the police force stationed in it, and is, under the County Inspector,

responsible for their discipline and for the peace of the district ; to each district headquarters a head constable is attached, who, in the absence of the D. I. is responsible. One Town Inspector and five District Inspectors are in charge of the force in Belfast. Two District Inspectors are appointed to the city of Cork, and one each to the cities of Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick and Londonderry.

Besides these there are two District Inspectors of the Crime Department attached to each of the five divisions into which the country is at present divided, under Divisional Magistrates ordering all matters connected with Prevention of Crime and the Preservation of the Peace in their respective divisions. This system was commenced in very disturbed parts of the country as a tentative measure at the close of 1881 ; it has since been extended to the whole country, but has never been put upon a thoroughly sound footing. Two of the present Divisional Magistrates are members (one an Assistant Inspector-General, the other a County Inspector) of the force. The three others are taken from the Resident magistracy and are not members of the force. The sergeants and constables of the force are distributed according to the requirements in each county, city and town, the general distribution being triennially subject to a careful revision by the Lord Lieutenant.

The circumstances and duties, however, vary immensely in different localities. If stationed in a quiet town or village in some northern county still uninfected to any great extent by the League—alas ! how few they are—the barrack\* is comfortable, provisions easily obtained, the neighbours not afraid to be openly friendly, and the duties comparatively light ; whereas if in a disturbed part of the country where the League are in power, the police are at all times liable to be called upon for harassing, often dangerous, duty, such as assisting at resisted evictions, the most unpleasing of all the duties which fall to the lot of an Irish policeman, the suppression of proclaimed meetings, the protection of persons who have rendered themselves obnoxious to the League, daily and nightly patrols in the wildest parts of the country, probably over hill and bog on dark and wet nights, with the view of ambushing and preventing some anticipated so-called " moonlight " outrage, such as pulling an old man out of his bed

\* In Ireland the police are distributed in parties of four or more under a head constable or sergeant, and the house, whether large or small, where they are lodged is called the " Barrack."



and in front of his window, in spite of the entreaties of his wife and children, shooting him either in the head or legs, or beating him with sticks and stones (the punishment is proportioned according to the gravity of the offence). Frequent long journeys have also to be made for the conveyance of prisoners to gaol, and other purposes.\* In disturbed parts of the country the police are in many instances lodged in iron huts placed in some wild, out-of-the-way parts, where outrages have been committed or are apprehended. The difficulty of obtaining provisions is often very great, but when the party are, as is often the case, "Boycotted," then so much the greater. I think it is proof of the good spirit pervading the force that among parties so situated, instances of want of discipline are comparatively rare, and the men turn out cheerfully and with readiness for the performance of every duty.

As an instance of the cheery manner in which, under trying circumstances, the men of the force perform their duties, one specially impressed itself upon my memory at the time. It will be remembered that in 1880 Captain Boycott, then a land agent in the County Mayo, was one of the first who, for the sins attributed to him, was visited by that cruel and savage form of punishment now so forcibly expressed by the addition of his name as a verb to the English language. We all now know what that verb means :—that while alive your neighbours are to have no communication with you, neither sell to, nor buy from, you, but to shun you as a leper ; if you are sick you are to be left to die, and if dead, to be left unburied. Such, if not interfered with by the police, or by others strong enough to resist the mandates of the League, is Boycotting carried out to the bitter end. In this case a body of indignant Northerners (Orangemen they were said to be : I only know they were fine, brave fellows) determined to go to Captain Boycott's relief, get in his crops of turnips, potatoes, &c., and do for him such other work as his neighbours and former labourers dared not, if they would.

Government foresaw that this invasion of the West by those who did not understand its laws might lead to a serious breach of the peace, even a species of civil war, and though the invaders were quite ready to defend themselves, it was decided to cover

\* Besides police duties proper, the constabulary are employed in many other ways, such as taking agricultural statistics, taking the Census survey, collecting notices and polling papers for the election of Poor Law Guardians, &c.

their advance and their stay in the West with a formidable force. Accordingly about seventy cavalry, two hundred infantry, and fifty constabulary (there were already a certain number of the latter on the spot) were ordered for the expedition, which I was directed to accompany in my capacity as a magistrate.\* Supplemented by an additional strength of cavalry and infantry for escort on the march, we met the Northerners at Claremorris Station on the evening of the 11th of November, 1880. Upon their appearance, about sixty strong, the inhabitants, who had assembled in large numbers, would certainly have torn them in pieces if they could; as it was, they were obliged to content themselves with savagely cursing and shrieking at them. Poor Colonel Coghill, in command of the detachment of 19th Hussars, whose horse, driven mad by the wild howls, reared and fell back, was seriously hurt, and put *hors de combat* for the campaign.

We had to proceed that night to Ballinrobe, about fourteen miles. Cars had been provided to meet us outside the town, but as the Leaguers on the spot forbade the drivers to take a Northerner on his car at the peril of their lives, they refused. Consequently, as we could not avail ourselves of them except by force, which we did not wish to use, all were obliged to march. It turned out a very wet night, but having posted police patrols along the road, we met with no impediment or resistance, and made Ballinrobe about 9.30 P.M., where the whole expedition was put up in the barracks or in tents.

The next day we went on to Captain Boycott's farm on the shores of Lough Mask; the word had evidently been passed round that no notice was to be taken of us, and instead of a scene like that at Claremorris on the former evening, we passed through Ballinrobe and along the road to the farm without a man showing his head.

Arrived at the farm the protecting force pitched their camp; the police, uneducated to this, understood nothing of tent life nor of field cooking; neither were they, like the soldiers, provided with camp equipage or cooking utensils. However, the necessary tents were obtained, pots and pans were purchased, and, assisted by their kind soldier-comrades and the hospitality of Captain Boycott, they soon settled down. The police duty was very trying, for, besides constant night patrols, they had to mount guard and sentry all day over each group of Northerners at work in the fields.

\* The Inspector-General, Deputy, and each Assistant Inspector-General, is *ex officio* a magistrate for the whole of Ireland.

The weather was at times very severe—wind, rain and snow ; the whole expedition however, soldiers and Northerners, were as cheerful as possible, and I believe all well behaved ; but I think that owing to the circumstances explained, the police had to contend with greater discomforts ; nevertheless during the sixteen days that they remained there was not a grumble, and their behaviour was exemplary. I should say that, being lodged with Resident Magistrates and others in the inn at Ballinrobe, although constantly in the camp I had not to share its discomforts, but very frequently partook of Captain Boycott's wide hospitality.

I have already said that the Force are temperate in their habits. I may cite as some proof of this that *every report of drunkenness* on or off duty is forwarded, with the evidence and a full statement, to the Inspector-General, and is dealt with only by him or by the Deputy, or Assistant Inspector-General at headquarters, and I am safe in saying that such reports never amount to a daily average of 1 in 1500 of the strength of the force. In all cases where an offence of drunkenness, or other, is denied, and the evidence on the face of the report itself is not conclusive, it is referred to a court of enquiry of two or more officers, who take the evidence on oath on the spot, and forward it, with their own opinion of guilty or not guilty, for the Inspector-General to deal with. The punishments in his power are fines, which may be levied to the amount of £3 on a man's pay, though except in an extreme case, so heavy a fine is never exacted, or transfer to another station or county at the offender's own expense. Of course if the offence is disgraceful, or the offender incorrigible, it may be met by dismissal, and if of higher rank than a constable by reduction or dismissal.

As regards promotion, and records or rewards for good service, the system, as regards the former—a very difficult matter to deal with in so large a force so as to bring the best men to the front—is, that, giving to seniority its full share of consideration, each District Inspector recommends to his County Inspector, in the order of merit, those whom he judges most eligible. The County Inspector then selects from these lists, or recommends to the Inspector-General from his own knowledge, those whom he thinks best ; this list is carefully scanned at headquarters, and the general character of the men, so far as it may be known by favourable or unfavourable records, considered ; it is also carefully checked, to see that no undue proportion of one religion

predominates. No objection arising, the recommendations, so far as vacancies for promotion exist, are confirmed.\* Any recommendation for favourable record, or reward for a special act of good police service, is first very carefully analyzed in the district it comes from, and all those who may have in any way shared in the service are afforded an opportunity of representing their claim, if they believe they have any, to be included ; it is then submitted to a board of headquarter officers, who carefully consider the merits of the case, and submit their opinion with reference to it to the Inspector-General. Rewards may be granted in the shape of special promotion, or of favourable record (of which there are two classes), with pecuniary reward attached or not, or of pecuniary reward alone. A favourable record, even without pecuniary reward attached, has advantages in itself, and is much valued. As there are daily opportunities all over the country for men to distinguish themselves, either in dealing with "moonlighters" face to face, in the detection of crime, apprehension of desperate characters, in rescuing persons from drowning, fire, or other dangers, the recommendations for reward are very numerous.

I give below, without names, a sketch of one or two, which will give an idea of the general nature of them :—

One night, upon information received at the headquarters of one of the most disturbed districts in Ireland, Serjeant — and a party of constables proceeded, by order of the District Inspector, to the outskirts of the town, where they surprised several moonlighters in the act of disguising themselves, and after a difficult chase through a network of buildings brought them to bay in an unoccupied room, where they succeeded in arresting five of them, and in obtaining with them three revolvers, a sword, several boxes of ammunition, canisters of powder and shot, masks, &c. ; four of them violently resisted, but they were eventually handcuffed and taken prisoners to the barrack ; other police were afterwards much engaged in this case obtaining evidence of the nature of their intentions, &c., and were very successful. The prisoners were returned for trial, found guilty, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment with hard labour. After the successful termination of the trial the names of the police engaged were submitted to the Inspector-General for special consideration ; several of them, with others of the

\* Every man whose name is submitted for promotion must have passed an examination in knowledge of police duties, arithmetic, &c.

district, had, in the meantime, further distinguished themselves in most important cases, such as arresting and prosecuting to conviction and imprisonment two men for killing cattle; arresting moonlighters who fired upon the police, prosecuting them to conviction and imprisonment with hard labour; arresting and prosecuting to conviction and penal servitude a man caught in the act of posting threatening notices. I think it is interesting, as regards general character, to show the service and records of eleven members of the force recommended in one case. (See page 38.)

One case alluded to in the records was a very serious one. Two policemen were, in the execution of their duty, and after a severe fight, in which they manfully resisted their assailants, knocked down, savagely beaten, deprived of their arms, and left for dead. Four of the assailants were afterwards brought to justice, convicted, and sentenced to penal servitude, the judge speaking most highly of the conduct of the men assaulted, and of those who afterwards assisted in the detection and prosecution.

There is not room in the pages of a magazine, nor have I the material before me, to enable me to add more to these cases of individual good service. I, nevertheless, know that, among the records of the force, cases would be found full of interest, of conspicuously brave conduct, and of persevering detective work on the part of members of the force sufficient to fill a volume.

The following public rewards and recognitions of good service have been awarded to the force.

In April, 1867, Parliament voted £2,000 to be distributed among those members who had rendered signal services in connection with the Fenian rising in the month previous, when many of the police barracks were attacked and bravely defended. On the 7th September in the same year the late Duke (then Marquis) of Abercorn, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, announced to a representative portion of the force paraded at the dépôt for the occasion, that as a proof of Her Majesty's satisfaction at the gallant conduct of the force, and of Her confidence in their loyalty and devotion, She had been graciously pleased to command that they should in future bear the title of The Royal Irish Constabulary, and wear the Harp and Crown as their badge.

The late Lord Mayo, then Lord Naas and Chief Secretary for Ireland, who was afterwards assassinated when Governor-



No.	RANK.	LENGTH OF SERVICE.	RECORDS.	
			FAVOURABLE.	UNFAVOURABLE.
1	Sergeant.	Years. M'ths. 7 10	I. Good service in a murder case. (Gratuity of £5 without record.) II. Detective ability and promptness in arresting cattle-stealers. (1st Class Record.)	Nil.
2	Acting-Sergeant.	16 0	I. Stopping a runaway horse. (2nd Class Record.) II. Prosecution and conviction of a moonlighter. (1st Class Record.)	One.
3	Constable .	5 9	Detective ability in procuring evidence and assisting in arresting parties who had waylaid and assaulted two constables who were on protection duty. (Approbation and £2 gratuity.)	Nil.
4	Constable .	4 3	Nil . . . . .	Nil.
5	Constable .	4 3	Nil . . . . .	Nil.
6	Head-Constable.	11 5	Special good service in two murder cases. (To be promoted to Head-Constable and £20 gratuity.)	Nil.
7	Constable .	5 8	I. Stopping a runaway horse. (2nd Class Record.) II. Same service and reward as No. 3.	Nil.
8	Constable .	5 7	Prompt and judicious action on night patrol. (2nd Class Record.)	Nil.
9	Constable .	5 6	Nil . . . . .	Nil.
10	Constable .	7 9	I. Good service in murder case. (Gratuity £3 without record.) II. Good service in connection with arrest and conviction of three men for robbery of arms. (£1 Gratuity.)	Nil.
11	Head-Constable.	15 11	Ability and efficient service in a case of murder. (1st Class Record, and to be promoted to Head-Constable.)	Nil.

It will be observed that only one had ever received an unfavourable record.

General of India, was present on the occasion, and made a most impressive speech, which concluded as follows: "I sincerely hope that you may never again be called upon to point your rifles at the breasts of your rebellious countrymen. But be that as it may, the country knows that it can rely on you, and whether in actual conflict with disaffection or in the performance of your ordinary service, you will act with the same faithfulness and energy which has always been the characteristic of your corps. Your duties are not to impose on a people the yoke of despotism, nor to enforce the mandates of an absolute and irresponsible ruler. You are the free servants of a free people, and your principal duty is to maintain that order without which society could not exist, and to enforce those laws which are formidable only to the evil-doer. Maintain your discipline, practise rigidly those principles of loyalty, fidelity, and truthfulness which have brought so much credit on your force, and you will always find accorded to you the loftiest reward to which a British subject can aspire, the approval of your Sovereign and the gratitude of your country." There are few who really wish for Ireland's welfare who will not admit the sense and sympathise with the feeling which prompted these words, and which would be equally applicable if spoken to-day.

In 1882, in consideration of the arduous duties cast upon the force during the Land League agitation, and the great extra expense thrown upon the men by their performance (the allowances to cover such expenses are now more liberal), a sum of £180,000 was voted by Parliament, from which special grants of three months' pay to men of over three years' service, and at the rate of two or one month's pay respectively to those of two or one year's service, were made to the head and other constables who were serving in the force on the 24th April, 1882 (£160,000 only of this grant was expended).

It has been urged from time to time that the discontent which showed itself in the ranks of the force in 1882, most conspicuously in Limerick, and which found vent in a system of anonymous and insubordinate communications by letter and telegram with headquarters and between stations in different parts of the country, was due to sympathy with the forces of anarchy outside. This is utterly untrue. The discontent was entirely due to grievances, real or supposed, in the force itself, which at the earliest opportunity were inquired into and where found to be real were redressed. It is also often stated by those

ignorant of the facts, that the Government was at this time obliged to obtain other men to do the constabulary duty. This is equally untrue. It was a notable feature of the movement, ill-judged and injurious to their reputation as it certainly at the time was, that no part of the force at any time withdrew themselves from their regular duties, and—*parvis componere magna*—it would be as reasonable to attribute the insubordinate revolt of our sailors at Spithead and the Nore in 1797 to sympathy with England's enemies, as to say that such was the cause of this unfortunate and deplorable spasm of insubordination on the part of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

So far, happily for the country, its enemies have, in spite of threats or persuasions, been unable to draw the Force from their allegiance, or to prevent the best of Ireland's youth from gladly enrolling in its ranks. During part of last year no doubt a terrible fear pervaded all ranks, owing to the prospect which seemed to open to them of being at any moment cut adrift and handed over to the control of those who bore them no love. Imagine how bitterly discouraging to them and full of encouragement to their enemies must such a prospect have been, and how galling the later utterances from such a source as those referred to in the earlier part of this article. Neither can they easily forget the message to "Remember Mitchelstown," or the utterly unsupported statements made as to the circumstances to which it referred.

For myself I am content to rest satisfied with and to refer others to the public and responsible statement made regarding them by Mr. Balfour, Chief Secretary, in his speech at Birmingham reported in the *Times* of the 5th Nov., who, when referring to his former words on the same subject in Parliament, says, "I neither regret a single word nor withdraw from a single word that I said in defence of the police;" and in the same speech, referring to the murder of Head-Constable Whelehan, he describes him as "a policeman who died, if ever man did, in the service of his country; no soldier ever perished on the field of battle more directly serving the true interests of his country."

The following case, which I find recorded, though it happened so long ago as 1831, is possibly not without its moral at the present time.

A party of one officer and thirty-six constables escorting a process server in the county of Kilkenny in connection with the then hated collection of tithes, having imprudently entered

a narrow defile were attacked from the heights by upwards of two thousand persons variously armed, who demanded the body of the process server, but as this was refused, large stones were hurled upon the party, injuring many. The police imprudently fired all together upon the most prominent assailants, killing two; the fact of their muskets being then unloaded was at once taken advantage of, and a furious hand to hand attack made upon them with pitchforks, scythes, reaping hooks, &c. The officer and fourteen of the men were at once murdered and eight others badly wounded, including the process server, who, with two of the constables, died the next day.

If the police at Michelstown had not used their firearms, is it not probable that they too might have been overpowered with perhaps similar or more disastrous results? If they had had none to use, can it be asserted that the loss of life would have been less?

The Force deserves well of this country; they have at all times, and never more than during the last seven years, rendered willing and invaluable service to the State, and while their country is continually torn to pieces by religious and political agitation, these men, though strong in their religious feelings and no doubt more or less imbued with political opinions, learn in their disciplined life to be kindly tolerant of each other's views, and beyond reach of the intimidation which overpowers the wills of their fellow-countrymen, they remain unmoved by outside agitation. No doubt that in every large force there must be some members undeserving of confidence, but those who in this force have shown themselves improperly influenced by sympathy with rebellious agitation have been infinitesimally few; and so long as it remains the "Royal Irish Constabulary" and its members are supported in the execution of their duty, they may be relied upon in the future as in the past.

Their service during the last half century is the brightest page in Irish history, and goes far to prove what, if only permitted to show itself, is the true feeling of the Irish people.

R. BRUCE.

## The Waiting Supper.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

AUTHOR OF "THE WOODLANDERS," ETC.



### I.

WHOEVER had perceived the yeoman's tall figure standing on Squire Everard's lawn in the dusk of that October evening fifty years ago, might have said at first sight that he was loitering there from idle curiosity. For a large five-light window of the manor-house in front of him was unshuttered and uncurtained, so that the illuminated room within could be scanned almost to its four corners. Obviously nobody was ever expected to be in this part of the grounds after nightfall.

The apartment thus commanded by an eye from without was occupied by two persons only; they were sitting over dessert, the tablecloth having been removed in the old-fashioned way. The fruits were local, consisting of apples, pears, nuts, and such other products of the summer as might be presumed to grow on the estate. There was strong ale and rum on the table, and but little wine. Moreover, the appointments of the dining-room were simple and homely even for the date, betokening a countrified household of the smaller gentry, without much wealth or ambition—formerly a numerous class, but now in great part ousted by the territorial landlords.

One of the two sitters was a young lady in white muslin, who listened somewhat impatiently to the remarks of her companion, an elderly, rubicund personage, whom the merest stranger could have pronounced to be her father. The watcher evinced no signs of moving, and it became evident that affairs were not so simple as they first had seemed. The tall farmer was in fact no accidental spectator, and he stood by premeditation close to the trunk of a tree, so that had any traveller passed along the



road without the park gate, or even along the drive to the door, that person would scarce have noticed the other, notwithstanding that the gate was quite near at hand, and the park little larger than a paddock. There was still light enough in the western heaven to faintly brighten one side of the man's face, and to show against the dark mass of foliage behind the admirable cut of his profile; also to reveal that the front of the manor-house, small though it seemed, was solidly built of stone in that never-to-be-surpassed style for the English country residence—the mullioned and transomed Elizabethan.

The lawn, although neglected, was still as level as a bowling-green—which indeed it might once have served for; and the blades of grass before the window were raked by the candle-shine, which stretched over them so far as to touch faintly the yeoman's face on that side.

Within the dining-room there were also, with one of the twain, the same signs of a hidden purpose that marked the farmer. The young lady's mind was straying as clearly into the shadows as that of the loiterer was fixed upon the room—nay, it could be said that she was even cognisant of the presence of him outside. Impatience caused her little foot to beat silently on the carpet, and she more than once rose to leave the table. This proceeding was checked by her father, who would put his hand upon her shoulder, and unceremoniously press her down into her chair, till he should have concluded his observations. Her replies were brief enough, and there was factitiousness in her smiles of assent to his views. A small iron casement between two of the mullions was open, so that some occasional words of the dialogue were audible without.

"As for drains—how can I put in drains? The pipes don't cost much, that's true; but the labour in sinking the trenches is ruination. And then the gates—they should be hung to stone posts, otherwise there's no keeping them up through harvest." The Squire's voice was strongly toned with the local accent, so that he said "drains" and "geäts" like the rustics on his estate.

The landscape without grew darker, and the young man's figure seemed to be absorbed into the trunk of the tree. The small stars filled in between the larger, the nebulae between the small stars, the trees quite lost their voice; and if there was still a sound, it was the purl of a stream which stretched along under the trees that bounded the lawn on its northern side.

At last the young girl did get to her feet, and so secured her

retreat. "I have something to do, papa," she said. "I shall not be in the drawing-room just yet."

"Very well," replied he. "Then I won't hurry." And closing the door behind her, he drew his decanters together, and settled down in his chair.

Three minutes after that, a female shape emerged from a little garden-door which admitted from the lawn to the entrance front, and came across the grass. She kept well clear of the dining-room window, but enough of its light fell on her to show, escaping from the long dark-hooded cloak that she wore, stray verges of the same light dress which had figured but recently at the dinner-table. The hood was contracted tight about her face with a drawing-string, making her countenance small and baby-like, and lovelier even than before.

Without hesitation she brushed across the grass to the tree under which the young man stood concealed. The moment she had reached him he enclosed her form with his arm. The meeting and embrace, though by no means formal, were yet not passionate; the whole proceeding was that of persons who had repeated the act so often as to be unconscious of its performance. She turned within his arm, and faced in the same direction with himself, which was towards the window; and thus they stood without speaking, the back of her head leaning against his shoulder. For a while each seemed to be thinking his and her diverse thoughts.

"You have kept me waiting a long time, dear Christine," he said at last. "I wanted to speak to you particularly, or I should not have stayed. How came you to be dining at this time o' night?"

"My father has been out all day, and dinner was put back till five o'clock. I know I have kept you; but Nicholas, how can I help it sometimes, if I am not to run any risk? My poor father insists upon my listening to all he has to say; since my brother left he has had nobody else to listen to him; and to-night he was particularly tedious on his usual topics—draining, and tenant-farmers, and the village people. I must take daddy to London; he gets so narrow always staying here."

"And what did you say to it all?"

"Oh, I took the part of the tenant-farmers, of course, as the beloved of one should in duty do." There followed a little break or gasp, implying a strangled sigh.

"You are sorry you have encouraged that beloved one?"

"O no, Nicholas. . . . What is it you want to see me for particularly?"

"I know you *are* sorry, as time goes on, and everything is at a dead lock, with no prospect of change, and your rural swain loses his freshness! Only think, this secret understanding between us has lasted near three year, ever since you was a little over sixteen."

"Yes; it has been a long time."

"And I an untamed uncultivated man, who has never seen London, and who knows nothing about society at all."

"Not uncultivated, dear Nicholas. Untravelled, socially unpractised, if you will," she said smiling. "Well, I did sigh; but not because I regret being your plighted one. What I do sometimes regret is that the scheme, which my meetings with you are but a part of, has not been carried out in its entirety. You said, Nicholas, that if I consented to swear to keep faith with you, you would go away and travel, and see nations, and peoples, and cities, and take a professor with you, and study books and art, simultaneously with your study of men and manners; and then come back at the end of two years, when I should find that my father would by no means be indisposed to accept you as a son-in-law. You said your reason for wishing to get my promise before starting was that your mind would then be more at rest when you were far away, and so could give itself more completely to knowledge, than if you went as my unaccepted lover only, fuming with anxiety as to my favour when you came back. I saw how reasonable that was; and solemnly plighted myself to you in consequence. But instead of going to see the world, you stay on and on here to see me."

"And you don't want me to see you?"

"Yes—no—it is not that. It is that I have latterly felt frightened at what I am doing when not in your actual presence. It seems so wicked not to tell my father that I have a lover close at hand, within touch and view of both of us; whereas, if you were absent my conduct would not seem quite so treacherous. The realities would not stare at one so. You would be a pleasant dream to me, which I should be free to indulge in without reproach of my conscience; I should live in hopeful expectation of your returning fully qualified to boldly claim me of my father. There, I have been terribly frank, I know."

He in his turn had lapsed into gloomy breathings now. "I did plan it as you state," he answered. "I did mean to go

away the moment I had your promise. But, dear Christine, I did not foresee two or three things. I did not know what a lot of pain it would cost to tear myself from you. And I did not know that my miserly uncle—heaven forgive me calling him so!—would so positively refuse to advance me money for my purpose—the scheme of travelling with an accomplished tutor costing a formidable sum o' money. You have no idea what it would cost!”

“But I have said that I'll find the money.”

“Ah, there,” he returned, “you have hit a sore place. To speak truly, dear, I would rather stay unpolished a hundred years than take your money.”

“But why? Men continually use the money of the women they marry.”

“Yes; but not till afterwards. No man would like to touch your money at present, and I should feel very mean if I were to do so in present circumstances. That brings me to what I was going to propose. But no—upon the whole I will not propose it now.”

“Ah! I would guarantee expenses, and you won't let me! The money is my personal possession: it comes to me from my late grandfather, and not from my father at all.”

He laughed forcedly and pressed her hand. “There are more reasons why I cannot tear myself away,” he added. “What would become of my uncle's farming? Six hundred acres in this parish, and five hundred in the next—a constant traipsing from one farm to the other; he can't be in two places at once. Still, that might be got over if it were not for the other matters. Besides, dear, I still should be a little uneasy, even though I have your promise, lest somebody should snap you up away from me.”

“Ah, you should have thought of that before. Otherwise I have committed myself for nothing.”

“I should have thought of it,” he answered, gravely. “But I did not. There lies my fault, I admit it freely. Ah, if you would only commit yourself a little more, I might at least get over that difficulty! But I won't ask you. You have no idea how much you are to me still; you could not argue so coolly if you had. What property belongs to you I hate the very sound of; it is you I care for. I wish you hadn't a farthing in the world but what I could earn for you!”

“I don't altogether wish that,” she murmured.

“I wish it, because it would have made what I was going to

propose much easier to do than it is now. Indeed I will not propose it, although I came on purpose, after what you have said in your frankness."

"Nonsense, Nic. Come, tell me. How can you be so touchy!"

"Look at this then, Christine dear." He drew from his breast-pocket a sheet of paper and unfolded it, when it was observable that a seal dangled from the bottom

"What is it?" She held the paper sideways, so that what there was of window-light fell on its surface. "I can only read the old-English letters—why—our names! Surely it is not a marriage-licence?"

"It is."

She trembled. "Oh, Nic; how could you do this—and without telling me!"

"Why should I have thought I must tell you? You had not spoken 'frankly' then as you have now. We have been all to each other more than these two years, and I thought I would propose that we marry privately, and that I then leave you on the instant. I would have taken my travelling-bag to church, and you would have gone home alone. I should not have started on my adventures in the brilliant manner of our original plan, but should have roughed it a little at first; my great gain would have been that the absolute possession of you would have enabled me to work with spirit and purpose, such as nothing else could do. But I dare not ask you now—so frank as you have been."

She did not answer. The document he had produced gave such unexpected substantiality to the venture with which she had so long toyed as a vague dream merely, that she was, in truth, frightened a little. "I—don't know about it!" she said.

"Perhaps not. Ah, my little lady, you are wearying of me!"

"No, Nic," responded she, creeping closer. "I am not. Upon my word, and truth, and honour, I am not, Nic."

"A mere tiller of the soil, as I should be called," he continued, without heeding her. "And you—well, a daughter of one of the—I won't say oldest families, because that's absurd, all families are the same age—one of the longest chronicled families about here, whose name is actually the name of the place."

"That's not much, I am sorry to say! My poor brother—but I won't speak of that. . . . Well," she murmured mischievously, after a pause, "you certainly would not need to be



uneasy if I were to do this that you want me to do. You would have me safe enough in your trap then ; I couldn't get away ! ”

“ That's just it ! ” he said vehemently. “ It *is* a trap—you feel it so, and that though you wouldn't be able to get away from me you might particularly wish to ! Ah, if I had asked you two years ago you would have agreed instantly. But I thought I was bound to wait for the proposal to come from you as the superior ! ”

“ Now you are angry, and take seriously what I meant purely in fun. You don't know me even yet ! To show you that you have not been mistaken in me, I *do* propose to carry out this licence. I'll marry you, dear Nicholas, to-morrow morning.”

“ Ah, Christine ! I am afraid I have stung you on to this, so that I cannot——”

“ No, no, no ! ” she hastily rejoined ; and there was something in her tone which suggested that she had been put upon her mettle and would not flinch. “ Take me whilst I am in the humour. What church is the licence for ? ”

“ That I've not looked to see—why our parish church here, of course. Ah, then we cannot use it ! We dare not be married here.”

“ We do dare,” said she. “ And we will too, if you'll be there.”

“ *If* I'll be there ! ”

They speedily came to an agreement that he should be in the church-porch at ten minutes to eight on the following morning, awaiting her ; and that, immediately after the conclusion of the service which would make them one, Nicholas should set out on his long-deferred educational tour, towards the cost of which she was resolving to bring a substantial subscription with her to church. Then, slipping from him, she went indoors by the way she had come, and Nicholas bent his steps homewards.

## II.

Instead of leaving the lawn by the gate, he flung himself over the fence, and pursued a direction towards the river under the trees. And it was now, in his lonely progress, that he showed for the first time outwardly that he was not altogether unworthy of her. He wore long water-boots reaching above his knees, and, instead of making a circuit to find a bridge

by which he might cross the Swenn—as the river aforesaid was called—he made straight for the point whence proceeded the low roar that was at this hour the only evidence of the stream's existence. He speedily stood on the verge of the waterfall which caused the noise, and stepping into the water at the top of the same, waded through with the sure tread of one who knew every inch of his footing, even though the canopy of trees rendered the darkness almost absolute, and a false step would have precipitated him into the pool beneath. Soon reaching the boundary of the grounds, he continued in the same direct line to traverse the alluvial valley, full of brooks and tributaries to the main stream—in former times quite impassable, and impassable in winter now. Sometimes he would cross a deep gully on a plank not wider than the hand; at another time he ploughed his way through beds of spear-grass, where at a few feet to the right or left he might have been sucked down into a morass. At last he reached firm land on the other side of this watery tract, and came to his house on the rise behind—an ordinary farmstead, from the back of which rose indistinct breathings, belchings, and snortings, the rattle of halters, and other familiar features of an agriculturist's home. *farmers*

While Nicholas Long was packing his bag in an upper room of this dwelling, Miss Christine Everard sat at a desk in her own chamber at Swenn-Everard manor-house, looking with pale fixed countenance at the candles.

"I ought—I must now!" she whispered to herself. "I should not have begun it if I had not meant to carry it through! It runs in the blood of us, I suppose." She alluded to a fact unknown to her lover, the clandestine marriage of an aunt under circumstances somewhat similar to the present. In a few minutes she had penned the following note:—

"October 13, 1838.

"DEAR MR. EASTMAN,—Can you make it convenient to yourself to meet me at the Church to-morrow morning at eight? I name the early hour because it would suit me better than later on in the day. You will find me in the chancel, if you can come. An answer yes or no by the bearer of this will be sufficient.

"CHRISTINE EVERARD."

She sent the note to the rector immediately, waiting at a small side-door of the house till she heard the servant's footsteps returning along the lane, when she went round and met him in

the passage. The rector had taken the trouble to write a line, and answered that he would meet her with pleasure.

A dripping fog which ushered in the next morning was highly favourable to the scheme of the pair. At that time of the century Swenn-Everard House had not been altered into a farm-homestead; the public lane passed close under its walls; and there was a door opening directly from one of the old parlours—the south parlour, as it was called—into the lane which led to the village. Christine came out this way, and after following the lane for a short distance entered upon a path within a belt of plantation, by which the church could be reached privately. She even avoided the churchyard gate, walking along to a place where the turf without the low wall rose into a mound, enabling her to mount upon the coping and spring down inside. She crossed the wet graves, and so glided round to the door. He was there, with his bag in his hand. He kissed her with a sort of surprise, as if he had expected that at the last moment her heart would fail her.

Though it had not failed her, there was, nevertheless, no great ardour in Christine's bearing—merely the momentum of an antecedent impulse. They went up the aisle together, the bottle-green glass of the old lead quarries admitting but little light at that hour, and under such an atmosphere. They stood by the altar-rail in silence, Christine's skirt visibly quivering at each beat of her heart.

Presently a quick step ground upon the gravel, and Mr. Eastman came round by the front. He was a quiet bachelor, courteous towards Christine, and not at first recognizing in Nicholas a neighbouring yeoman (for he lived in a remote part of the parish), advanced to her without revealing any surprise at her unusual request. But in truth he was surprised, the keen interest taken by many country young women at the present day in church decoration and festivals being then unknown.

"Good morning," he said; and repeated the same words to Nicholas more mechanically.

"Good morning," she replied gravely. "Mr. Eastman, I have a serious reason for asking you to meet me—us, I may say. We wish you to marry us."

The rector's gaze hardened to fixity, rather between than upon either of them, and he neither moved nor replied for some time.

"Ah!" he said at last.

"And we are quite ready."

"I had no idea——"

"It has been kept rather private," she said calmly.

"Where are your witnesses?"

"They are outside in the meadow, sir. I can call them in a moment," said Nicholas.

"Oh—I see it is—Mr. Nicholas Long," said Mr. Eastman, and turning again to Christine, "Does your father know of this?"

"Is it necessary that I should answer that question, Mr. Eastman?"

"I am afraid it is—highly necessary."

Christine began to look concerned.

"Where is the licence?" the rector asked; "since there have been no banns."

Nicholas produced it, Mr. Eastman read it, an operation which occupied him several minutes—or at least he made it appear so; till Christine said impatiently, "We are quite ready, Mr. Eastman. Will you proceed? Mr. Long has to take a journey of a great many miles to-day."

"And you?"

"No. I remain."

Mr. Eastman assumed firmness. "There is something wrong in this," he said. "I cannot marry you without your father's presence."

"But have you a right to refuse us?" interposed Nicholas. "I believe we are in a position to demand your fulfilment of our request."

"No you are not! Is Miss Everard of age? I think not. I think she is far from being so. Eh, Miss Everard?"

"Am I bound to tell that?"

"Certainly. At any rate you are bound to write it. Meanwhile I refuse to solemnize the service. And let me entreat you two young people to do nothing so rash as this, even if by going to some strange church, you may do so without discovery. The tragedy of marriage——"

"Tragedy?"

"Certainly. It is full of crises and catastrophes, and ends with the death of one of the actors. The tragedy of marriage, as I was saying, is one I shall not be a party to your beginning with such light hearts, and I shall feel bound to put your father on his guard, Miss Everard. Think better of it, I entreat

you! Remember the proverb, 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure.'"

Christine grew passionate, almost stormed at him. Nicholas implored; but nothing would turn that obstinate rector. She sat down and painfully reflected. By-and-by she confronted Mr. Eastman.

"Our marriage is not to be this morning, I see," she said. "Now grant me one favour, and in return I'll promise you to do nothing rashly. Do not tell my father a word of what has happened here."

"I agree—if you undertake not to elope."

She looked at Nicholas, and he looked at her. "Do you wish me to elope, Nic?" she asked.

"No," he said.

So the compact was made, and they left the church singly, Nicholas remaining till the last, and closing the door. On his way home, carrying the well-packed bag which was just now to go no further, the two men who were mending water-carriers in the meadows approached the hedge, as if they had been on the alert all the time.

"You said you mid want us for zummat, sir?"

"All right—never mind," he answered through the hedge. "I did not require you after all."

### III.

At a neighbouring manor there lived a queer and primitive couple who had lately been blessed with a son and heir. The christening took place during the week under notice, and this had been followed by a feast to the parishioners. Christine's father, one of the same generation and kind, had been asked to drive over and assist in the entertainment, and Christine, as a matter of course, accompanied him.

When they reached Eldhampton Hall, as the house was called, they found the usually quiet nook a lively spectacle. Tables had been spread in the apartment which lent its name to the whole building—the hall proper—covered with a fine open-timbered roof, whose braces, purlins and rafters made a brown thicket of oak overhead. Here tenantry of all ages sat with their wives and families, and the servants were assisted in their ministrations by the sons and daughters of the owner's friends and neighbours. Christine lent a hand among the rest.



She was holding a plate in each hand towards a huge brown platter of baked rice-pudding, from which a footman was scooping a large spoonful, when a voice reached her ear over her shoulder: "Allow me to hold them for you."

Christine turned, and recognised in the speaker the nephew of the entertainer, a young man from London, whom she had already met on two or three occasions. She accepted the proffered help, and from that moment, whenever he passed her in their marchings to and fro during the remainder of the serving, he smiled acquaintance. When their work was done, he improved the few words into a conversation. He plainly had been attracted by her fairness.

Bellston was a self-assured young man, not particularly good-looking, with more colour in his skin than even Nicholas had. He had flushed a little in attracting her notice, though the flush had nothing of nervousness in it—the air with which it was accompanied making it curiously suggestive of a flush of anger; and even when he laughed it was difficult to banish that fancy.

The rich autumn sunlight streamed in through the window-panes upon the heads and shoulders of the venerable patriarchs of the hamlet, and upon the middle-aged, and upon the young; upon men and women who had played out, or were to play, tragedies or tragi-comedies in that nook of civilization not less great, humanly, than those which, enacted on more central arenas, fix the attention of the world. One of the party was a cousin of Nicholas Long's, who sat with her husband and children.

To make himself as locally harmonious as possible, Mr. Bellston remarked to his companion on the scene—

"It does one's heart good," he said, "to see these simple peasants enjoying themselves."

"Oh, Mr. Bellston!" exclaimed Christine; "don't be too sure about that word 'simple'! You little think what they see and meditate! Their reasonings and emotions are as complicated as ours."

She spoke with a vehemence which would have been hardly present in her words but for her own relation to Nicholas. The sense of that produced in her a nameless depression thenceforward. The young man, however, still followed her up.

"I am glad to hear you say it," he returned warmly. "I was merely attuning myself to your mood, as I thought. The real truth is that I know more of the Parthians, and Medes, and

dwellers in Mesopotamia—almost of any people, indeed—than of the English rustics. Travel and exploration are my profession, not the study of the British peasantry.”

Travel. There was sufficient coincidence between his declaration and the course she had urged upon her lover, to lend Bellston's account of himself a certain interest in Christine's ears. He might perhaps be able to tell her something that would be useful to Nicholas, if their dream were carried out. A door opened from the hall into the garden, and she somehow found herself outside, chatting with Mr. Bellston on this topic, till she thought that, upon the whole, she liked the young man. The garden being his uncle's, he took her round it with an air of proprietorship ; and they went on amongst the Michaelmas daisies and chrysanthemums, and through a door to the fruit-garden. A green-house was open, and he went in and cut her a bunch of grapes.

“How daring of you ! They are your uncle's.”

“Oh, he don't mind—I do anything here. A rough old buffer, isn't he ?”

She was thinking of her Nic, and felt that by comparison with her present acquaintance, the farmer more than held his own as a fine and intelligent fellow ; but the harmony with her own existence in little things, which she found here, imparted an alien tinge to Nicholas just now. The latter, idealized by moonlight, or a thousand miles of distance, was altogether a more romantic object for a woman's dream than this smart new-lacquered man ; but in the sun of afternoon, and amid a surrounding company, Mr. Bellston was a very tolerable companion.

When they re-entered the hall, Bellston entreated her to come with him up a spiral stair in the thickness of the wall, leading to a passage and gallery, whence they could look down upon the scene below. The people had finished their feast, the newly-christened baby had been exhibited, and a few words having been spoken to them they began, amid a racketing of forms, to make for the greensward without, Nicholas's cousin and cousin's wife and cousin's children among the rest. While they were filing out, a voice was heard calling—

“Hullo!—here, Jim ; where are you ?” said Bellston's uncle. The young man descended, Christine following at leisure.

“Now will ye be a good fellow,” the Squire continued, “and set them going outside in some dance or other that they know ?”

I'm dead tired, and I want to have a vew words with Mr. Everard before we join 'em—hey, Everard? They are shy till somebody starts 'em; afterwards they'll keep gwine brisk enough."

"Ay, that they wool," said Squire Everard.

They followed to the lawn; and here it proved that James Bellston was as shy, or rather as averse, as any of the tenantry themselves, to acting the part of fugleman. Only the parish people had been at the feast, but outlying neighbours had now strolled in for a dance.

"They want 'Speed the Plough,'" said Bellston, coming up breathless. "It must be a country dance, I suppose? Now, Miss Everard, do have pity upon me. I am supposed to lead off; but really I know no more about speeding the plough than a child just born! Would you take one of the villagers?—just to start them, my uncle says. Suppose you take that handsome young farmer over there—I don't know his name, but I dare say you do—and I'll come on with one of the dairyman's daughters as second couple."

Christine turned in the direction signified, and changed colour—though in the shade nobody noticed it. "Oh, yes—I know him," she said coolly. "He is from our own place—Mr. Nicholas Long."

"That's capital—then you can easily make him stand as first couple with you. Now I must pick up mine."

"I—I think I'll dance with you, Mr. Bellston," she said with some trepidation. "Because, you see," she explained eagerly, "I know the figure, and you don't—so that I can help you; while Nicholas Long, I know, is familiar with the figure, and that will make two couples who know it—which is necessary, at least."

Bellston showed his gratification by one of his angry-pleasant flushes—he had hardly dared to ask for what she proffered freely; and having requested Nicholas to take the dairyman's daughter, led Christine to her place, Long promptly stepping up second with his charge. There were grim silent depths in Nic's character; a small deedy spark in his eye, as it caught Christine's, was all that showed his consciousness of her. Then the fiddlers began—the celebrated Mellstock fiddlers who, given free stripping, could play from sunset to dawn without turning a hair. The couples wheeled and swung, Nicholas taking Christine's hand in the course of business with the figure,

when she waited for him to give it a little squeeze ; but he did not.

Christine had the greatest difficulty in steering her partner through the maze, on account of his self-will, and when at last they reached the bottom of the long line, she was breathless with her hard labour. Resting here, she watched Nic and his lady ; and, though she had decidedly cooled off in these later months, began to admire him anew. Nobody knew these dances like him, after all, or could do anything of this sort so well. His performance with the dairyman's daughter so won upon her, that when "Speed the Plough" was over she contrived to speak to him.

"Nic, you are to dance with me next time."

He said he would, and presently asked her in a formal public manner, lifting his hat gallantly. She showed a little backwardness, which he quite understood, and allowed him to lead her to the top, a row of enormous length appearing below them as if by magic as soon as they had taken their places. Truly the Squire was right when he said that they only wanted starting.

"What is it to be?" whispered Nicholas.

She turned to the band. "'The Honeymoon,'" she said.

And then they trod the delightful last-century measure of that name, which if it had been ever danced better, was never danced with more zest. The perfect responsiveness which their tender acquaintance threw into the motions of Nicholas and his partner lent to their gyrations the fine adjustment of two interacting parts of a single machine. The excitement of the movement carried Christine back to the time—the unreflecting passionate time, about two years before—when she and Nic had been incipient lovers only ; and it made her forget the carking anxieties, the vision of social breakers ahead, that had begun to take the gilding off her position now. Nicholas, on his part, had never ceased to be a lover ; no personal worries had as yet made him conscious of any staleness, flatness, or unprofitableness in his admiration of Christine.

"Not quite so wildly, Nic," she whispered. "I don't object personally ; but they'll notice us. How came you here?"

"I heard that you had driven over ; and I set out—on purpose for this."

"What—you have walked?"

"Yes. If I had waited for one of uncle's horses I should have been too late."

"Eleven miles here and eleven back—two-and-twenty miles on foot—merely to dance!"

"With you. What made you think of this old 'Honeymoon' thing?"

"Oh! it came into my head when I saw you, as what would have been a reality with us if you had not been stupid about that licence, and had got it for a distant church."

"Shall we try again?"

"No—I don't know. I'll think it over."

The villagers admired their grace and skill, as the dancers themselves perceived; but they did not know what accompanied that admiration in one spot, at least.

"People who wonder they can foot it so featly together should know what some others think," a waterman was saying to his neighbour. "Then their wonder would be less."

His comrade asked for information.

"Well—really I hardly believe it—but 'tis said they be man and wife. Yes, sure—went to church and did the job a'most afore 'twas light one morning. But mind, not a word of this; for 'twould be the loss of a winter's work to me if I had spread such a report and it were not true."

When the dance had ended she rejoined her own section of the company. Her father and Mr. Bellston the elder had now come out from the house, and were smoking in the background. Presently she found that her father was at her elbow.

"Christine, don't dance too often with young Long—as a mere matter of prudence, I mean, as folk might think it odd, he being oone of our own parish people. I should not mention this to 'ee if he were an ordinary young fellow; but being superior to the rest it behoves you to be careful."

"Exactly, papa," said Christine.

But the revived sense that she was deceiving him threw a damp over her spirits. "But, after all," she said to herself, "he is a young man of Swenn-Everard, handsome, able, and the soul of honour; and I am a young woman of that place, who have been constantly thrown into communication with him. Is it not, by nature's rule, the most proper thing in the world that I should marry him, and is it not an absurd conventional regulation which says that such a union would be wrong?"

It may be concluded that the strength of Christine's large-minded argument was rather an evidence of weakness than of strength in the passion it concerned, which had required



neither argument nor reasoning of any kind for its maintenance: when full and flush in its early days.

When driving home in the dark with her father, she sank into pensive silence. She was thinking of Nicholas having to trudge on foot all those eleven miles after his exertions on the sward. Mr. Everard, arousing himself from a nap, said suddenly, "I have something to mention to ye, by George—so I have, Chris! You probably know what it is?"

She wondered if her father had discovered anything of her secret.

"Well, according to *him* you know. But I will tell 'ee. Perhaps you noticed young Jim Bellston walking me off down the lawn with him?—whether or no, we walked together a good while; and he informed me that he wanted to pay his addresses to 'ee. I naturally said that it depended upon yourself; and he replied that you was willing enough; you had given him particular encouragement—showing your preference for him by specially choosing him for your partner—hey? 'In that case,' says I, 'go on and conquer—settle it with her—I have no objection.' The poor fellow was very grateful, and in short, there we left the matter. He'll propose to-morrow."

She saw now to her dismay what James Bellston had read as encouragement. "He has mistaken me altogether," she said. "I had no idea of such a thing."

"What, you won't have him?"

"Indeed, I cannot!"

"Chrissy," said Mr. Everard with emphasis, "there's *no*body whom I should so like you to marry as that young man. He's a thoroughly clever fellow, and fairly well provided for. He's travelled all over the temperate zone; but he says that directly he marries he's going to give up all that, and be a regular stay-at-home. You would be nowhere safer than in his hands."

"It is true," she answered. "He *is* a highly desirable match, and I *should* be well provided for, and probably very safe in his hands."

"Then don't be skittish, and stand-to."

She had spoken from her conscience and understanding, and not to please her father. As a reflecting woman she believed that such a marriage would be a wise one. In great things Nicholas was closest to her nature; in little things Bellston seemed immeasurably nearer than Nic; and life was made up of little things.

Altogether the firmament looked black for Nicholas Long.

notwithstanding her half-hour's ardour for him when she saw him dancing with the dairyman's daughter. Most great passions, movements, and beliefs—individual and national—burst during their decline into a temporary irradiation, which rivals their original splendour; and then they speedily become extinct. Perhaps the dance had given the last flare-up to Christine's love. It seemed to have improvidently consumed for its immediate purpose all her ardour forwards, so that for the future there was nothing left but frigidity.)

Nicholas had certainly been very foolish about that licence!

#### IV.

This laxity of emotional tone was further increased by an incident, when, two days later, she kept an appointment with Nicholas in the Sallows. The Sallows was an extension of shrubberies and plantations along the banks of the Swenn, accessible from the lawn of Swenn-Everard House only, except by wading through the river at the waterfall or elsewhere. Near the fall was a thicket of box in which a trunk lay prostrate; this had been once or twice their trysting-place, though it was by no means a safe one; and it was here she sat awaiting him now.

The noise of the stream muffled any sound of footsteps, and it was before she was aware of his approach that she looked up and saw him wading across at the top of the waterfall.

Noontide lights and dwarfed shadows always banished the romantic aspect of her love for Nicholas. Moreover, something new had occurred to disturb her; and if ever she had regretted giving way to a tenderness for him—which perhaps she had not done with any distinctness—she regretted it now. Yet in the bottom of their hearts those two were excellently paired, the very twin halves of a perfect whole; and their love was pure. But at this hour surfaces showed garishly, and obscured the depths. Probably her regret appeared in her face.

He walked up to her without speaking, the water running from his boots; and, taking one of her hands in each of his own, looked narrowly into her eyes.

"Have you thought it over?"

"What?"

"Whether we shall try again; you remember saying you would at the dance?"

"Oh, I had forgotten that!"

"You are sorry we tried at all!" he said accusingly.

"I am not so sorry for the fact as for the rumours," she said.

"Ah! rumours?"

"They say we are already married."

"Who?"

"I cannot tell exactly. I heard some whispering to that effect. Somebody in the village told one of the servants, I believe. This man said that he was crossing the churchyard early on that unfortunate foggy morning, and heard voices in the chancel, and peeped through the window as well as the dim panes would let him; and there he saw you and me and Mr. Eastman, and so on; but thinking his surmises would be dangerous knowledge, he hastened on. And so the story got afloat. Then your aunt, too——"

"Good Lord!—what has she done?"

"The story was told her, and she said proudly, 'Oh yes, it is true enough. I have seen the licence. But it is not to be known yet.'"

"Seen the licence? How the——"

"Accidentally, I believe, when your coat was hanging somewhere."

The information, coupled with the infelicitous word "proudly," caused Nicholas to flush with mortification. He knew that it was in his aunt's nature to make a brag of that sort; but worse than the brag was the fact that this was the first occasion on which Christine had deigned to show her consciousness that such a marriage would be a source of pride to his relatives—the only two he had in the world.

"You are sorry, then, even to be thought my wife, much less to be it." He dropped her hand, which fell lifelessly.

"It is not sorry exactly, dear Nic. But I feel uncomfortable and vexed, that after screwing up my courage, my fidelity, to the point of going to church, you should have so muddled—managed the matter that it has ended in neither one thing nor the other. How can I meet acquaintances, when I don't know what they are thinking of me?"

"Then, dear Christine, let us mend the muddle. I'll go away for a few days and get another licence, and you can come to me."

She shrank from this perceptibly. "I cannot screw myself up to it a second time," she said. "I am sure I cannot!"

Besides, I promised Mr. Eastman. And yet how can I continue to see you after such a rumour? We shall be watched now, for certain."

"Then don't see me."

"I fear I must not for the present. Altogether——"

"What?"

"I am very depressed."

These views were not very inspiriting to Nicholas, as he construed them. It may indeed have been possible that he construed them wrongly, and should have insisted upon her making the rumour true. Unfortunately, too, he had come to her in a hurry through brambles and briars, water and weed, and the shaggy wildness which hung about his appearance at this fine and correct time of day lent an impracticability to the look of him.

"You blame me—you repent your courses—you repent that you ever, ever owned anything to me!"

"No, Nicholas, I do not repent that," she returned gently, though with firmness. "But I think that you ought not to have got that licence without asking me first; and I also think that you ought to have known how it would be if you lived on here in your present position, and made no effort to better it. I can bear whatever comes, for social ruin is not personal ruin, or even personal disgrace. But as a sensible, new-risen poet says, whom I have been reading this morning—

'The world and its ways have a certain worth :  
And to press a point while these oppose  
Were simple policy.'

As soon as you had got my promise, Nic, you should have gone away—yes—and made a name, and come back to claim me. That was my silly girlish dream about my hero."

"Perhaps I can do as much yet! And would you have indeed liked better to live away from me for family reasons, than to run a risk in seeing me for affection's sake? O what a cold heart it has grown! If I had been a prince, and you a dairy-maid, I'd have stood by you in the face of the world!"

She shook her head. "Ah—you don't know what society is—you don't know."

"Perhaps not. Who was that strange gentleman of about seven-and-twenty I saw at Mr. Bellston's christening feast?"

"Oh—that was his nephew James. Now he is a man who

has seen an unusual extent of the world for his age. He is a great traveller, you know."

"Indeed."

"In fact an explorer. He is very entertaining."

"No doubt."

Nicholas received no shock of jealousy from her announcement. He knew her so well that he could see she was not in the least in love with Bellston. But he asked if Bellston were going to continue his explorations.

"Not if he settles in life. Otherwise he will, I suppose."

"Perhaps I could be a great explorer, too, if I tried."

"You could, I am sure."

They sat apart, and not together; each looking afar off at vague objects, and not in each other's eyes. Thus the sad autumn afternoon waned, while the waterfall hissed sarcastically of the inevitableness of the unpleasant. Very different this from the time when they had first met there.

The nook was most picturesque; but it looked horribly common and stupid now. Their sentiment had set a colour hardly less visible than a material one on surrounding objects, as sentiment must where life is but thought. Nicholas was as devoted as ever to the fair Christine: but unhappily he too had moods and humours; and the division between them was not closed.

She had no sooner got indoors and sat down to her work-table than her father entered the drawing-room. She handed him his newspaper; he took it without a word; went and stood on the hearthrug, and flung the paper on the floor.

"Christine, what's the meaning of this terrible story? I was just on my way to look at the register."

She looked at him without speech.

"You have married—Nicholas Long?"

"No, father."

"No? Can you say no in the face of such facts as I have been put in possession of?"

"Yes."

"But—the note you wrote to the rector—and the going to church?"

She briefly explained that their attempt had failed.

"Ah! Then this is what that dancing meant, was it? By —, it makes me—. How long has this been going on, may I ask?"

"This what?"

"What, indeed? Why, making him your beau. Now listen



to me. All's well that ends well ; from this day, madam, this moment, he is to be nothing more to you. You are not to see him. Cut him adrift instantly ! I only wish his folk were on my farm—out they should go, or I would know the reason why. However, you are to write him a letter to this effect at once."

"How can I cut him adrift?"

"Why not? You must, my good maid!"

"Well, though I have not actually married him, I have solemnly sworn to be his wife when he comes home from abroad to claim me. It would be gross perjury not to fulfil my promise. Besides, no woman can go to church with a man to deliberately solemnize matrimony, and refuse him afterwards, if he does nothing wrong meanwhile."

The uttered sound of her strong conviction seemed to kindle in Christine a livelier perception of all its bearings than she had known while it had lain unformulated in her mind. For when she had done speaking she fell down on her knees before her father, covered her face, and said, "Please, please forgive me, papa ! How *could* I do it without letting you know ! I don't know, I don't know !"

When she looked up she found that, in the turmoil of his mind, her father was moving about the room. "You are within an ace of ruining yourself, ruining me, ruining us all !" he said. "You are nearly as bad as your brother, begad !"

"Perhaps I am—yes—perhaps I am !"

"That I should father such a harum-scarum brood !"

"It is very bad ; but Nicholas——"

"He's a scoundrel !"

"He is *not* a scoundrel !" cried she, turning quickly. "He's as good and worthy as you or I, or anybody bearing our name, or any nobleman in the kingdom, if you come to that ! Only—only"—she could not continue the argument on those lines. "Now, father, listen !" she sobbed ; "if you taunt me I'll go off and join him at his farm this very day, and marry him to-morrow, that's what I'll do !"

"I don't taunt ye !"

"I wish to avoid unseemliness as much as you."

She went away. When she came back a quarter of an hour later, thinking to find the room empty, he was standing there as before, never having apparently moved. His manner had quite changed. He seemed to take a resigned and entirely different view of circumstances.

"Christine, I have suffered more in this last haaf hour than I hope you may suffer all your life. But since this was to happen, I'll bear it, and not complain. All volk have crosses, and this is one of mine. Well, this is what I've got to say—I almost feel that you must carry out this attempt at marrying Nicholas Long. Faith, you must! The rumour will become a scandal if you don't—that's my view. I have tried to look at the brightest side of the case. Nicholas Long is a young man superior to most of his class, and fairly presentable. And he's not poor—at least his uncle is not. I believe the old muddler could buy me up any day. However, a farmer's wife you must be, as far as I can see. As you've made your bed, so ye must lie. Parents propose, and ungrateful children dispose. You shall marry him, and immediately."

Christine hardly knew what to make of this. "He is quite willing to wait, and so am I. We can wait for two or three years, and then he will be as worthy as——"

"You must marry him. And the sooner the better, if 'tis to be done at all. . . . And yet I did wish you could have been Jim Bellston's wife. I did wish it! But no."

"I did wish it, and do still, in one sense," she returned gently. His moderation had won her out of her defiant mood, and she was willing to reason with him.

"You do?" he said, surprised.

"I see that in a worldly sense my conduct may be considered a mistake."

"H'm—I am glad to hear that—after my death you may see it more clearly still; and you won't have long to wait, to my reckoning."

She fell into bitter repentance, and kissed him in her anguish. "Don't say that!" she cried. "Tell me what to do?"

"If you'll leave me for an hour or two I'll think. Drive to the market and back—the carriage is at the door—and I'll try to collect my senses. Dinner can be put back till you return."

In a few minutes she was dressed, and the carriage bore her up the hill which divided the village and manor from the market-town.

## V.

A quarter of an hour brought her into the High Street, and for want of a more important errand she called at the harness-maker's for a dog-collar that she required.

It happened to be market-day, and Nicholas, having postponed the engagements which called him thither to keep the appointment with her in the Sallows, rushed off at the end of the afternoon to attend to them as well as he could. Arriving thus in a great hurry on account of the lateness of the hour, he still retained the wild, amphibious appearance which had marked him when he came up from the meadows to her side—an exceptional condition of things which had scarcely ever before occurred. When she crossed the pavement from the shop door, the shopman bowing and escorting her to the carriage, Nicholas chanced to be standing at the road-waggon office, talking to the master of the waggons. There were a good many people about, and those near paused and looked at her transit, in the full stroke of the level October sun, which went under the brims of their hats, and pierced through their button-holes. From the group she heard murmured the words: "Mrs. Nicholas Long."

The unexpected remark, not without distinct satire in its tone, took her so greatly by surprise that she was confounded. Nicholas was by this time nearer, though coming against the sun he had not yet perceived her. Influenced by her father's lecture, she felt angry with him for being there and causing this awkwardness. Her notice of him was therefore slight, supercilious perhaps, slurred over; and her vexation at his presence showed distinctly in her face as she sat down in her seat. Instead of catching his waiting eye, she positively turned her head away.

A moment after she was sorry she had treated him so; but he was gone.

Reaching home she found on her dressing-table a note from her father. The statement was brief:

"I have considered and am of the same opinion. You must marry him. He can leave home at once and travel as proposed. I have written to him to this effect. I don't want any virtuals, so don't wait dinner for me."

Nicholas was the wrong sort of man to be blind to his Christine's mortification, though he did not know its entire cause. He had lately foreseen something of this sort as possible.

"It serves me right," he thought, as he trotted homeward. "It was absurd—wicked of me to lead her on so. The sacrifice would have been too great—too cruel!" And yet, though he thus took her part, he flushed with indignation every time he said to himself, "She is ashamed of me!"

On the ridge which overlooked Swenn-Everard he met a neighbour of his—a stock-dealer—in his gig, and they drew rein and exchanged a few words. A part of the dealer's conversation had much meaning for Nicholas.

"I've had occasion to call on Squire Everard," the former said; "but he couldn't see me on account of being quite knocked up at some bad news he has heard."

Nicholas rode on past Swenn-Everard to Homeston Farm, pondering. He had new and startling matter for thought as soon as he got there. The Squire's note had arrived. At first he could not credit its import; then he saw further, took in the tone of the letter, saw the writer's contempt behind the words, and understood that the letter was written as by a man hemmed into a corner. Christine was defiantly—insultingly—hurled at his head. He was accepted because he was so despised.

And yet with what respect he had treated her and hers! Now he was reminded of what an agricultural friend had said years ago, when the eyes of Nicholas were once fixed on Christine as on an angel as she passed: "Better a little fire to warm ye than a great one to burn ye. No good can come of throwing your heart there." He went into the mead, sat down, and asked himself four questions:—

1. How could she live near her acquaintance as his wife, even in his absence, without suffering martyrdom from the stings of their contempt?

2. Would not this entail total estrangement between Christine and her family also, and her own consequent misery?

3. Must not such isolation extinguish her affection for him?

4. Supposing that her father rigged them out as colonists and sent them off to America, was not the effect of such exile upon one of her gentle nurture likely to be as the last?

In short, whatever they should embark in together would be cruelty to her, and his death would be a relief. It would, indeed, in one aspect be a relief to her now, if she were so ashamed of him as she had appeared to be that day. Were he dead, this little episode with him would fade away like a dream.

Mr. Everard was a good-hearted man at bottom, but to take his enraged offer seriously was impossible. The least thing that he could do would be to go away and never trouble her more. To travel and learn and come back in two years, as mapped out in their first sanguine scheme, required a staunch heart on her side, if the necessary expenditure of time and money were to be

afterwards justified ; and it were folly to calculate on that when he had seen to-day that her heart was failing her already. To travel and disappear and not be heard of for many years would be a far more independent stroke, and it would leave her entirely unfettered. Perhaps he might rival in this kind the accomplished Mr. Bellston, of whose journeyings he had heard so much.

He sat and sat, and the fog rose out of the river, enveloping him like a fleece ; first his feet and knees, then his arms and body, and finally submerging his head. When he had come to a decision he went up again into the homestead. He would be independent, if he died for it, and he would free Christine. Exile was the only course. The first step was to inform his uncle of his determination.

Two days later Nicholas was on the same spot in the mead, at almost the same hour of eve. But there was no fog now ; a blustery autumn wind had ousted the still, golden days and misty nights ; and he was going, full of purpose, in the opposite direction. When he had last entered the mead he was an inhabitant of the Swenn valley ; in forty-eight hours he had severed himself from that spot as completely as if he had never belonged to it. All that appertained to him in the Swenn valley now was circumscribed by the portmanteau in his hand.

In making his preparations for departure he had unconsciously held a faint, foolish hope that she would communicate with him and make up their estrangement in some soft womanly way. But she had given no signal, and it was too evident to him that her latest mood had grown to be her fixed one, proving how well-founded had been his impulse to set her free.

He entered the Sallows, found his way in the dark to the garden-door of the house, slipped under it a note to tell her of his departure, and explaining its true reason to be a consciousness of her growing feeling that he was an encumbrance and a humiliation. Of the direction of his journey and of the date of his return he said nothing.

His course now took him into the high road, which he pursued for some miles in a north-easterly direction, still spinning the thread of sad inferences, and asking himself why he should ever return. At daybreak he stood on the hill above Shottsford-Forum, and awaited a coach which passed about this time along that highway towards Salisbury and London.

*(To be concluded next month.)*



## A Purely Personal Matter.

WHEN staying in Lancashire many years ago, I used often to hear this saying, "There's nowt so queer as foak."

During my connection with the German Reed Entertainment, a period covering the whole of my professional career, I have sung at numerous private parties.

No startling events have happened, it is true—no hairbreadth escapes, no wandering in strange lands, singing to half-civilized ruffians in the Far West, or the Far East. No! life has gone fairly smoothly. Still, even in the well-ordered, well-to-do houses, where such entertainment as "Five o'Clock Teas" and "At Homes" are given, and where life is apparently smooth and pleasant, albeit somewhat monotonous, the old saying heard years ago often comes back to me, "There's nowt so queer as foak."

I have never kept a diary—whether wisely or not I cannot say—but my memory is fairly good; and in thinking over the varieties of places I have visited, houses I have sung at, and people I have met, many reminiscences crop up amusing to me; but whether they would prove so to others is a problem I am now endeavouring to solve, only hoping for forgiveness, should the pronoun "I" irritate by too frequent repetition in this "Purely Personal Matter."

In the first place, let me take this opportunity of saying that during the seventeen years of my professional career, wherever I have been, in town or country, at "Five o'Clock Teas" and "At Homes," I have experienced the greatest kindness and courtesy, and have made many personal friendships. I heard a story once, "*on the best authority*"—which *primâ facie* creates doubt—that I was once sent to dine in the Servants' Hall at a country house, and afterwards sent in what they were pleased to call my bill, with an extra charge of five guineas for my wounded

feelings. Needless to say the story is a gross fabrication, and I am not certain that one would lose so much in some cases by dining in the Servants' Hall; but, speaking seriously, I have found nothing but kindness and courtesy.

If occasionally "things one would rather have left unsaid," or "things one would rather have left undone," have occurred, they have simply been the result of that thoughtlessness which characterizes us all at times—a thoughtlessness the perpetrator would be the first to acknowledge and—laugh at.

If I have found eccentricities in them, they have no doubt noticed the same in me. After all it is but water on the duck's back; we shake it off, and in five minutes the annoyance, if any exist, is forgotten, and we can shake hands and make merry over the recollection.

How monotonous our daily life would be without peculiarities! They are the sauces that give character and flavour.

I sometimes think that my experiences must be somewhat similar to those of waiters. They must see much the same sort of society—like myself they are "in the movement"—they look after the tea and ices; I am in the music department. But the waiter has this advantage: he entrenches himself behind an outwork of tables, and in the intervals of repose, can silently contemplate the ice-pails and the maid who is "washing up."

But I am not so lucky. I am often button-holed and put through a catechism, "How *do* you remember it all?" "Doesn't it fatigue you very much?" "Do you never catch cold?" "What do you do when you have a cold?" "Aren't you very tired of singing the same thing over and over again?"

But the person I like is the middle-aged man of blatant voice and retired-military-man appearance and manner, who comes up and says, "Um—er—that's rather good; really quite amusin'. I wonder—ah!—er—how you can remember all that nonsense!"

That class of man never pronounces the final "g." It is curious that it should be considered a sign of vulgarity to leave out the initial "h," while the "best people" take especial pains to do away with the final "g."

But who can account for the vagaries of Fashion?

For instance, who first introduced the present system of shaking hands in vogue among a certain set of "smart" London ladies? Why should the hands be lifted to the level of the shoulder, and then waggled to and fro horizontally? It is

idiotic, but "the thing." And what does not Fashion do for music and musicians!

I think more humbug surrounds music than any other branch of art.

People are so afraid of saying what they really like, and will suffer tortures rather than confess that they hate classical music. I *did* find a lady the other day who at last spoke the truth as to the form of entertainment she liked; but even then she was half-hearted, and took shelter behind illness.

It was a question between a circus and a classical concert. The circus carried the day. "Since my recent attack of neuralgia," wrote the lady, "I am not equal to classical music." It was the truth, I am sure, but the neuralgia was used as a scape-goat.

However, far be it from me to complain. The "Five o' Clock Tea" and the "At Home" have been very good friends to me, and have provided me with much amusement, combined in many instances with instruction.

It is instructive, and a very healthy discipline, to find how little is known of many public men whose writings and doings you think a matter of world-wide interest.

I often find myself completely nonplussed in houses—both in town and country—by the fact that, when I tell the last good story I have heard at the Club about So-and-so, no one knows anything about the individual, though his novels, poems, or what-not may "lie on every drawing-room table."

It is healthy discipline to apply this ignorance to your own case, and it gives you very much the same sort of moral shock to your conceit that the traveller experiences on his return from abroad. He cannot imagine how the fellows at the Club can have got on without him; he can hear them in his imagination saying, "Where's old Dick? Why isn't he here? The Club don't seem like the same Club without old Dick." He rushes into the smoking-room, and one man notices him and says, "Oh! how are you? Have you been away?"

Then on the other hand there is the extraordinary knowledge of one's private affairs by the general public—a knowledge as minute as it is inaccurate. And I sometimes think, in my own case, if they can take the trouble to invent so much about a comic singer, how much more must they invent about an eminent statesman or Royal personage. And the public is so confident in its own infallibility, it will brook no contradictions. The

first and original report remains in the public memory—the contradiction of it but seldom.

I was amused a season or two ago when a gentleman came up to me at an evening party and said, "You wear wonderfully well, going on singing all these years as you do. I wonder how you stand it at your time of life!" "Well," I said, "I'm not so very old; I'm only forty, and you talk of me as if I were fifty-five." "Oh, come," he said, "you're more than that; you're at least fifty-five if you're a day. Why, I've known you singing for these last twenty-five years!" I said, "I beg your pardon; I made my *début* May 16, 1870, at the age of twenty-five." "Oh, nonsense!" he said; "you're fifty-five if you're a day." I left him, merely remarking that I had no doubt he was right, and I *was* fifty-five; and I only hoped I should carry my years as well as he did when I reached *his* age. He was about forty-five in reality. And the funny thing is that he thought I was rather rude to him, *his* remarks having been the perfection of taste and tact.

Were I asked to give a short, true, and succinct-account of my life, I should do it in the following manner:—

Surname . . . .	Grain.
Christian name . . . .	Richard Corney.
Condition . . . .	Bachelor
Born . . . . .	Oct. 26, 1844.
Education . . . .	Average middle class.
Profession . . . .	} Barrister, April 30, 1866. } Entertainer, May 16, 1870.

And there it is! "up to now!" But this is too commonplace a record of the truth for the public. I have been greeted as an old army man, an old naval man, and introduced to men who remembered me so well at Oxford or Cambridge—the latter rather shaking my belief in the veracity of man, seeing that I was never at any College or at any University.

My income is and has been stated for years to be £10,000. I am glad to hear it; but some one must have reduced it considerably "in transitu."

I have been twice to Egypt during the last nine years, the real reason being want of a little rest from daily work and shouting; but again the cause is too commonplace, and the public will accept nothing but "complete loss of brain power" or "consumption," the first leading by a head.

I am also at all times pleased to hear of my approaching marriage—the approach has now taken ten years to complete.

I am glad that the lady—widow at times, sometimes a spinster—is about the right age, and very well off. Her people objected at first, but have at length come round, owing to my retirement from public life. The house I am going to inhabit has been pointed out—but there is a little “rift within the lute.” No wedding presents have been sent, and I cannot ascertain the name of the lady. With Mrs. Gamp, I say most fervently and imploringly: “Give it a name!”

My unfortunate name is likewise the subject of much controversy. My parents played a very bad practical joke on me when they gave me the names in my baptism of Richard Corney. The proximity of Corney to Grain does look odd, I admit; but it is so written down in the Family Bible, and the Parish Registry of Teversham, Cambs. Sometimes I have letters addressed to Cornelius Grain—once a letter addressed Cornet Grain—and modest, retiring ladies sometimes apologise for writing to me by my “theatrical name,” as they do not know “my real one.”

I am sometimes claimed as an Irishman—all through my surname, and I have come to the conclusion that on the whole it has been far more trouble than it is worth. Rather an amusing episode occurred in a provincial town with reference to my name. A gentleman stopped me in the street, and said:

“Mr. Grain, I had the pleasure of meeting you some years ago, and I want to take this opportunity of introducing you to this young lady—a new cousin whom you have never seen.”

I bowed. The young lady bowed—and I, bewildered, stammered out:

“I think there must be some mistake. I never heard the name in connection with my family!”

“But,” said the gentleman, “you are Mr. Chichester Bolton, are you not?”

I said the name was very beautiful and sonorous, but unfortunately I could not lay claim to it. I said my name was Grain.

“Your real name?”

“My real name.”

“I am very sorry,” he said, “to have made this mistake; but the care-taker of the Assembly Rooms here said your real name was Chichester Bolton; and this young lady has a cousin of that name whom she has never seen!”

Thus did I gain and lose a new name; and, what is more, a charming cousin, in something under three minutes.



There is a favourite little story anent my name which I have known, and welcomed with each fresh narrator as a novelty, for the last ten or twelve years. Two old ladies in the country were asked to an "Afternoon," where I was going to sing; and, seeing my name in the corner of the card, asked if it was a sort of "harvest drink." It is told differently at times, but mine is the earliest extant edition. My only objection to the story is that the narrators are too peripatetic—they change the venue too frequently, and when they tell me that it happened last year to ladies of their acquaintance, I blush for them, for they are unblushing.

It often amuses me to watch the flounderings of people, who, knowing you but slightly, and in all probability caring for you less, think it a friendly duty to show a great interest in your movements. You meet one of these casual acquaintances, and he says:

"Oh! how are you? Let me see—you've been away, haven't you?"

"No, only for my usual month's holiday."

"Oh! I thought you were seedy, and had to go to Egypt?"

"Oh! I've been back three years!"

"Oh!—but—you're not with the German Reeds still!"

"Yes; I have never been anywhere else."

"Oh! I'd got some idea in my head—ah!—you're *looking* very well—oh—good-bye." Retires discomfited. How much better to have stuck to our conversational friend the weather!

I remember once on board a steamer going to Alexandria an Irishman said to me:

"Are ye in the surr-vice?"

I said no.

"What are ye then?"

I said a singer.

"A singer? What do ye sing in? Opera?"

I said no.

"Concerts?"

"Not exactly," I said. "I sing in entertainment! Perhaps you know my name—I'm Corney Grain!"

"Oh!" he said, "I never hurd of ye!!"

These little falls from the pinnacle of self-esteem are unpleasant, but "so good for one."

Sometimes I have come across very neat "sayings one would

rather have left unsaid." I was singing at an afternoon party, and I was the only "professional" there. A little boy played the violin. I remarked to my hostess that the boy showed signs of great promise. "Is he a professional?" I asked. "Oh! no," said my hostess; "he's the son of a gentleman!" The dear lady meant no offence, she only meant that the father was a man of means; but that she should have put it in the way she did, and made the remark to the only professional in the room, was perhaps unfortunate.

Nervousness sometimes causes people to blurt out most inconvenient truths. I arrived once at a large house to sing at an "At Home." My host was a very nervous shy man. I remarked, "You have two grand pianos in your drawing-rooms, I see!"

"Oh!—oh!—ye—yes!" said my host. "We hired the one that's open for this afternoon. My wife said 'We can't let Corney Grain play on our best piano.' Ha! ha! ha!"

I laughed a hollow "ha! ha! ha!" and went meekly to my hired companion for the afternoon.

Sometimes ladies sidle up and say in an undertone, "Be merciful, Mr. Grain, our piano is a new one."

"Oh! pray don't apologise," I reply, "it'll do well enough for my work."

One of the most awkward incidents that occurred to me was when a gentleman said, "Oh! yes! we'll get him to sing that. Mr. Grain, do give us your sketch of 'The Drinking Fountain,' I think it's quite your best."

I said I would with pleasure, but for the fact that I didn't know it, as it was Mr. Grossmith's sketch.

Then ensued an embarrassing silence, and the company in desperation rushed at the weather as a conversational relief.

Many years ago I was asked to sing at a lady's house. The lady was an excellent person of very Low Church views, and had doubts as to the wickedness of the comic song generally; but I believe her sons overcame her scruples, and she reluctantly consented to engage my services. But the morning of the party she had misgivings, and I received a note from her hoping that I would make no *Scriptural allusions* in my songs.

I remember I was very hurt and angry at the time: but I was young then, and sensitive. What agonies I endured when I first began to sing at private parties!

How hot and uncomfortable I felt when having just con-

cluded a medley song entitled "Romeo and Juliet," a lady asked me if that was "my charming sketch called 'Five o'Clock Tea,'" and when an old lady was put close to me with a large ear-trumpet, I thought I should have run away.

It was perhaps a little embarrassing to a young singer when a well-known lady of title said, "I should like you to come to my house at 4.30. How long can you go on?—for two hours at a stretch?" I humbly submitted that a little break of five minutes or so would be pleasing, I thought, both to audience and singer. "Oh!" she said, "I didn't know. I thought you could. We had a conjuror last year who did."

It is embarrassing also when you have sung what you fondly imagine are the best things you do, and the son of the house comes up and says, "I say, sing us a real comic song—something funny."

Perhaps the most depressing thing is when you are called "a funny man;" you are expected to be "funny" at all times and seasons—even at breakfast. The man who is funny at breakfast must be peculiarly constituted.

A friend of mine, a well-known actor and humourist, went to stay in a country house. The children had evidently heard that he was a "funny man," for they rushed up to him on his arrival, and said, "Oh! Mr. So-and-so, do be funny." He said he was tired with travelling, and dusty, and generally uncomfortable. "Oh!" but they said, "do say just one word of funniness!"

Some young men in a country house expressed themselves to a friend of mine as bitterly disappointed in me. I sang at the "At Home," and when the guests had gone, went rather tired and worn-out to the smoking-room. The men all came in—waited—smoked, and gradually slunk off.

On meeting my friend they said they were much disappointed. "Why, we went to the smoking room thinking he'd be funny and amuse us, and he just sat in a chair and smoked like anybody else!"

Well, I was a proof to those young men that there was at least one other man who could be as dull as they.

What a variety of pianos I have come across! I played on one at a large London house of a nobleman which cost 700 guineas; and at another nobleman's house on one which my host with pride informed me he had picked up for £12! It was an old-fashioned square, with one pedal and six octaves—modern pianos having seven. Sometimes I find a cottage piano

with the back turned to the audience—the back decorated with embroideries and plants, so that my only chance of being seen is by occasionally popping up over the top of it like a Jack-in-the-Green and a Jack-in-the-box combined.

But all these little petty annoyances fade when you get a cheery audience in a large room, a good piano, and room to move. Then I enjoy my work.

Singing to boys at a public school is perhaps the most delightful experience—they are so fresh, so young, and so appreciative of every point. You see they are not bothered as grown-up people are. They are not rendered cross by the carriage not coming—or the horses being kept waiting. They don't care how they are dressed—or, what is more important, how other people are dressed—and which seems to me to be the one constant thorn in the side of womankind, they are not wondering why the So-and-so's are not there, or what made the people ask the Thingummies. They are not "going on," as the poor wearied *chaperons* are—running in and out of drawing-rooms like disturbed rabbits in a warren—they have come to enjoy themselves—and if cheers be any criterion—they do!

But there is one charge brought against me, from which I am anxious to clear myself.

A gentleman came to me to engage my services at an "After-noon." It was all settled, when he said, "Then you don't want any screens or table—nothing but a piano?"—"Nothing, Sir!"—"Ah! I didn't know whether you didn't put your head through a hole in a bit of cardboard and call yourself Mr. Gladstone!!"

That I have grinned through a horse-collar for many years is perhaps too true, but I most emphatically deny that I ever committed so heinous a political offence as to put my head through a hole in a bit of cardboard and call myself Mr. Gladstone!!

R. CORNEY GRAIN.



## On a Tobogan.

OF the many sports and pastimes that make life cheery during the long winters of Canada none is more popular or more fashionable at present than tobogganing in those parts of the Dominion where cold is steady, and a hard frost pretty sure to hold its own after an abundant snowfall for weeks together under a clear sky.

The tobogan—corruption of the Indian word *odabagan* a sled, adopted by the white man as a light and graceful vehicle whereon to slide down icy slopes for pastime or exercise—has always been, and still is, in constant use among Indians, wild and semi-civilized, to transport for the former his dead game or firewood, for the latter his hunting supplies or scanty belongings, as well as anything else either may desire to carry from camp to camp. As the luggage van to a “pale face” so is the tobogan to a savage, with the difference that a tobogan is only available in winter and on snow.

A sledge, which is indeed only a short tobogan on runners, is ill adapted for travelling on any kind of snow track, or where there is no track at all, for the runners sink when the sledge is loaded, whereas the same weight being equally distributed on a tobogan’s flat surface is more easily and safely hauled.

In the North-West Territories of Canada, among the semi-civilized or “treaty Indians”—those who have entered into negotiations with the Government and receive yearly supplies of food, farming implements, and seed, &c.—the lord of the *teepee*, or wigwam, has the best of it when the family travel, for harnessed by a “tump line,” or thong of raw deer hide passing round her forehead and attached to the tobogan, the squaw toils on hour after hour, hooded in her long draped blanket, while he steps out in his fringed leggings and shorter blanket carrying, if anything, only a light gun.



But except in style and shape those shabby patched-up conveyances bear small resemblance to their smart descendant the tobogan of a higher civilization in use to-day for sliding (or toboganing as it is incorrectly called) down artificial or carefully prepared slopes, when a gay company assemble to take spiced wine or tea in the intervals of exercise, as they stand or sit about fancy "log cabins" lined with chintz sofas, or in stove-warmed marquees carpeted with furs.

Still made by Indians only, but "to order" now, and handsomely fashioned, the correct tobogan of to-day is formed of two smooth strips of birch or maple wood, each from nine to ten feet long, ten inches wide, and about an eighth of an inch thick, laid close together. Of these strips about two feet at one end is turned or curled over (by a steaming process and with raw-hide thong compresses) to within six inches of their floor, and connected at each edge by slight supports of stiffly twisted deer hide with the first cross rod. Of these cross rods there are five or six down the whole length of the strips, and lashed thereto with "babeesh," or thongs of raw deer hide, in this way uniting the strips (which we must now call the tobogan) firmly together. These cross rods, about an inch in diameter, are flattened on the lower side, and the thongs which lash them to the tobogan floor are placed about four inches apart and counter-sunk sufficiently deep to prevent them from interfering with the smooth surface of the tobogan underneath, which can never be too smooth for easy sliding, as any hitch or check is almost sure to send the occupant head-over-heels down the steep. Side rods, also about one-inch in diameter, and passing down each edge of the structure, rest on the cross rods an inch or so from the outside edge, and form a sort of hand-rail sufficiently high from the tobogan floor to allow the fingers to pass under and *grip*. These hand-rails are necessary in "Society" tobogans to hold on to while flying down hill, and in domestic or Indian ones as a means of securing those lashings necessary to keep pack or carcase in its place during a journey. The hand-rails must extend well up under the curled end or bow, which bow is strengthened on the front edge by a cross-bar fastened there by thongs to keep the curled boards from separating.

Neatly finished and polished, the tobogan is then made comfortable with a cunning little crimson rep mattress about two inches thick, a trifle narrower than the tobogan, and fastened to it with red braid ties passed round the hand-rail

at each junction with the cross rods. A thick gaily-coloured worsted cord attached to each side of the bow, forming a long loop, is used for dragging the tobogan by hand to the place of rendezvous or the solitary hill to which a grumpy slider goes for some "good exercise" all alone in his glory. If the rendezvous be distant, and the slider proceeds thither in his sleigh, the tobogan is fastened immediately behind it, and on these occasions it is not uncommon to see a pedestrian, tired of dragging his tobogan so far, wait till a passing sleigh gives him the opportunity to throw his cord to a friend inside, jump on the tobogan and, thus towed, complete his journey quite comfortably!

In the more primitive days of Canada, when the fun was called "coasting," and carried on in less exalted circles than is the case now, roughly made "hand sleds" of common painted wood, with low steel or iron-shod runners underneath, and projecting a few inches in front, the whole about four feet long and nine inches wide, were in constant use on natural slopes or hill sides, and formed the pet diversion of small boys and school-girls and rather fast "grown-ups," as little Dorrit would say, who liked strong exercise and feared not Mrs. Grundy.

A pleasant flavour of mischief was added to the sliding attractions of that day, for Mamma often said "No," and then came the excitement of being caught some bright moonlit night a mile or so from home, packed with one's bosom friend on a "coaster," as the sled is called, tearing down a steep forest roadway, and then scudding away—away, breathless, dishevelled, and nearly shaken to death, over the frozen surface of some lonely pine-fringed lake!

Such unprepared, rarely-used slides were very often both rough and dangerous. Many a "cropper," as the boys said, had we the truant sliders of those good old days—many a roll in the deep snow, sometimes even a sprained ankle or twisted shoulder, which stopped the fun for that evening and obliged us to sit on a fallen tree or log fence and take counsel what it was best to do, which generally resulted in a long cold wait until a low "bob" sleigh, packed with firewood cut in lengths, would come jogging out of the forest, when we would step out into the moonlight and beg a lift home.

Artificial slides—or a sort of narrow sloping causeway mounted on stout posts, joists, beams, and planks used to lengthen a natural declivity, or to supply a steep descent on level ground—were very uncommon if invented at all at that time in Canada,

and "coasting" was classed with "romps," which classing was indeed libellous, and, as we children declared, a "horrid shame;" but even then, and for years previous, the sport had been enjoyed in great perfection at what is known as the Upper Cone at Montmorenci Falls, eight miles below Quebec. Here, where the Montmorenci River pours over a sixty-foot wide ledge of rock and plunges, a boiling cataract, 240 feet into the St. Lawrence below, the spray and vapour driven from those torn and foaming waters—circling rainbow-tinted for ever and ever round the rocky base—freeze in winter with constantly increasing height. By February this frozen spray, so thickening and growing, has formed a sugar-loaf shaped cone from eighty to a hundred feet high, with another rounder cone near it of much smaller dimensions. The upper cone, reared close in front of the Fall, at an angle of sixty degrees, its crown in a mist of spray and its foot on the frozen river, is awful enough to climb on shallow uneven steps hewn up one icy slide; but who can convey the terrors of the moment when first the uninitiated gaze down that fair and gleaming precipice, and realize there is absolutely no other way of getting down again but on sled or tobogan, piloted by a "Habitant" or French-Canadian boy, who, crouched in front of the one or perched at the square end of the other, informs you by signs (for the roaring waters make speech inaudible) that it is time to start!

Very distinctly can I recall my own emotions under just such circumstances twenty years ago, and how my teeth chattered and knees smote together, between fear and cold, as I crouched on a sled behind my small conductor, with nothing to keep me there but the mortal dread of getting off, and felt the first—gentle—slip! Away we went, "swift as an arrow from the Tartar's bow," with a downward madness that almost took breath, sense, and sight clean away, until, what seemed to me several hours after, I found myself half-a-mile across the frozen St. Lawrence still sticking to the sled as it "slowed up," and observed, somewhat with astonishment, I was still on my accustomed planet safe and sound, a trifle unstrung and giddy, but much exhilarated, and quite ready to try it all over again!

Toboganing and Coasting first became fashionable in Canada when adopted by those agreeable warriors who, as officers of Guards, Rifles, and Line, with their regiments were sent to Canada at the time England was—as Punch's cartoon of the day put it—"waiting for an answer" from America about the Trent affair.

Suspense over, bluster backed down, and the Southern travellers safe in London, nothing remained for those eminently social heroes but to amuse themselves for the winter. This they did to their hearts' content. Never men made better use of a good opportunity. There were rinks crowded with struggling skaters, ball-rooms red with uniforms, snow roads lined with tandems, "drill" tramped on snowshoes, ice floors skimmed by anxiously watched curling stones, and many a snowy hillside darted over by the hand sleigh or tobogan, guided by some stalwart amateur absorbed in the effort to keep straight, so that the "finish" should find him something in line with the "start," and not thirty yards off, prostrate and bruised, his cropped head in the snow, his heels in the air, and his eyes dimmed with those horrible stars of shock and pain which blot out the noonday, and force the sufferer to the conclusion that he has had a bad fall!

"Upon my life," said Brown of the Rifles to Jones of the Line, one cold winter's day about that time, "I don't see how the thing sticks on!"

"Jove!" Brown responded, shaking his wise head; "neither do I."

Guests at a Canadian winter pic-nic to Montmorenci Falls and Cone, these two, lately "joined" in Canada, stood near the foot of the upper cone, and spoke as a small sled, guided by its daring owner, pitched over the first "drop" at the summit and dashed past them like a horizontal rocket.

About fifty strong, military and civilians, with a sprinkling of fair ladies, the clearest of heavens bent over the gay party as just unpacked from a line of smoking tandems, piled with fur robes and foot muffs, we—for I was one of them—stood waiting for orders what to do next. Before us lay a stretching landscape in contrasts of white and blue. Virgin snow glittered under a deep blue dome. Opposite our halting-place a darkly falling mass of furrowed water—silver on the far up sky-line, wreathed in shining vapour, and generally flashing all over with a dazzling mist of sparkle—poured down into a shallow of the frozen river we stood on. A hundred feet against its face, at an angle of some fifty degrees, rose the great sugar-loaf, sharply defined yet flecked with blowing spray; and towards our party a dozen or more dark-eyed "Habitant" boys, each with his gaudy sled, hurried to get the first chance of what an English cabby would call a "fare."

Most of the party "stuck," as Mr. Jones remarked, to the

smaller cone, and had great fun there, but some bold spirits adventured the higher one, scrambled painfully up the rough, broken slippery cut-out stairway to stand for a few moments on the narrow summit, deafened with roaring water and blinded with spray, till their turn came to start, carefully tucked up lest a stray fold might catch the tobogan and "slew" both unfortunates to the bottom of the slide.

What a dizzy rush it was to be sure, on that keenly cold afternoon, when, after a headlong pitch down the angle and a leap across the slight concave below it, one touched again farther down and raced on until brought up slowly on the plain from sheer loss of impetus!

But how proud the after moment when once again in a group of gazing friends one felt sufficiently collected to assume that air of indifference and nonchalance which people are so fond of affecting when half dead with fright!

"Tell me," said Jones, earnestly to his friend Brown, who had twice made the rush and each time had returned looking white and unhappy, "tell me, did you like it?"

But Brown was not caught so easily.

"Oh, bother," he answered irritably; "it is the thing to do, and I have done it!"

Before sunset we were called to dinner in a cave hollowed out at the base of the upper cone, and entered near the Fall. Rather a giddy portal for weak nerves was the great green archway draped with glittering icicles and a network of beautiful frost shapes facing that cliff of water, with the booming of ages close at hand.

Once entered we found ourselves in a wondrous fairy cavern—roof and walls of loveliest tints in green, supported by ice-hewn pillars. There, on ice-carved sofas, were stretched dark rugs of fur; and on an icy buffet no end of good things were spread with jugs of steaming coffee and hot, mixed wine. How we enjoyed that repast—what a capital drive home we had by tandem and starlight—what a merry dance in the Music Hall by way of a wind up, are all written in the delightful letter Jones mailed next day to the only girl he ever loved—of course I mean in England—he was quite desperate about at least six in Canada!

The brilliant Irishman who was sent to Canada as Governor-General fifteen years ago, threw himself heartily into Canadian amusements, and, ably assisted by his family, staff, and party, paid special attention to the tobogan. His example has been imitated by each successor, and of course society has followed



suit. Slides of every height, width, length, and angle are to be seen now in private grounds and even in back yards, down which "coasts" youth of all ages, from the big school-boy (who, however, prefers a steep street, with a chance "bobby" at the end of it) to the rosy toddler of four, who struggles with his tiny tobogan up the twenty-feet "chute," or slide—with its moderate eight-feet angle—and with woollen-gartered legs wide-stretched, slides gently down to the snow heap collected by nurse's orders to keep his excursion within limits.

Slides such as these are easily constructed, and give children capital exercise where a limited space and a great depth of snow make exercise hard to get. Six stout uprights of descending lengths, firmly planted in the ground, six feet apart, strengthened with cross beams, and floored as a bridge is floored with smooth boards, laid closely, and nailed on the frame, makes healthy winter's fun for very young people, and occupies many a holiday afternoon, not only by "coasting," but with the work of flattening and smoothing the fallen snow as it lies on the "chute," so as to make the surface hard packed and even, ready for the small conveyance which, though well fitted for its modest proportions, is yet long enough to carry two or three bundled-up, fur-capped mittened children, who are all the better pleased if there is a "spill" half-way down and a general roll to the bottom! Many a cold day these busy little architects may be seen patting down and smoothing the loose snow into proper shape, transporting more from below to fill up "holes" with their little wooden shovels, and even watering the smoothed surface to make it more slippery.

I saw one of these juvenile slides a few days ago fifty feet long at a safe angle, with rough wooden steps on one side leading to the snow-covered slope on the other. Four or five children in an ecstasy of enjoyment were scrambling up the stairway half-hauling, half-carrying their tobogans, to race down one after another. Literally covered with snow, for the time of hard dry snow is not yet, they were really pictures of health and happiness.

Of course natural hill sides are better and more picturesque than artificial ones, but they are not easily found adapted for toboganing. Good sliding depends very much on weather and the state of the snow. Damp sticky snow, or a thaw which has left the ice rough, as well as many other accidents, prevent much fun. The tobogan "won't go," and the slider gets wet. Neither is it easy to slide in tight-fitting or long garments. The

costume worn by men here generally consists of thick knickerbockers with heavy woollen stockings, mocassins of course, and a short double-breasted overcoat made of red, blue, or striped blankets, with a deep hood or "capuchon." This coat, girt loosely round the waist with a bright coloured fringed woollen sash, and a red or blue woollen "tuque" (an etherealized night-cap) its tassel hanging to the shoulder, finishes his equipment, with a pair of woollen or leathern mittens.

A woman's "get up" admits of greater variety in colour, and is often very dainty, albeit hooded blanket coats are *de rigueur* for them also, just reaching to the top of the mocassin, or short, so as to display a bright woollen skirt. Their tuques are smaller and closer, and generally almost concealed by the fleecy folds of a "cloud"—that peculiarly Canadian wrap which, consisting of a fringed strip of loosely knitted or woven thick soft wool nine feet long and eighteen inches wide, is both comfortable and becoming. To arrange one properly the cloud must be passed over the forehead, leaving one end half as long again as the other; both ends are then crossed behind the neck and drawn forward. The longest end passed once or twice about the neck—letting it lie snugly about ears, throat, cheeks, and chin—is next brought to meet the shorter one, when both are looped together, and the fringed ends fall over the left shoulder. A pretty sight it is to see a dark-eyed, bright-faced Canadian girl, wearing her blanket suit, shod with cariboo or moose hide mocassins daintily embroidered in stained porcupine quill, and muffled in her red or white cloud, seated ready for a start down hill, while her tall cavalier takes his place close behind her on the tobogan which is to flash them both through a thousand yards of bracing air.

Steering a tobogan well is an art not very easy to acquire, and on steep irregular hills, where obstructions are often close to the track, delicate management is required. Better not steer at all than steer too much—is the caution given to a novice. The lightest touch of foot or hand has a wonderful effect on a tobogan or coaster in full career, and all the accidents not due to positive carelessness may be set down to hasty, flurried steering. An experienced toboganer generally arranges himself as follows: Seated facing sideways on the square end of the tobogan—but always *looking* forward—he leans on the left hip, with the left leg loosely doubled on the tobogan, and supported by the left arm, of which the hand grasps the hand-rail or rod. The right

leg doubled uppermost of course is rapidly extended when a "steer" is absolutely necessary, which is effected by the slightest possible touch of the toe on whatever side of the tobogan it is required. But it is seldom necessary except when nearing the end of a chute, to round a curve, to avoid some unexpected obstruction, or to set the bow straight occasionally. Any ill-judged attempt is pretty sure to end in a fall. Bad accidents are, however, rare, and a fatal one fortunately is more uncommon still. Mishaps occur more frequently when the steerer, as is the case sometimes, sits facing the tobogan bow, his legs extended on its cushioned floor, when steering is managed with touches of the mittened hand instead of the mocassined foot; but in this attitude it is almost impossible to keep any command over the structure at all.

The ladies sit in front, Turkish fashion, and well tucked in on the tobogan. A long one will accommodate two or even three besides the steerer, when they sit one behind the other, the first close to the tobogan's curled bow. But the party *looks* best when only one pretty girl sits rather back, her neat little mocassin against the bow, and her smiling face not very far from her companion's, who from over her shoulder keeps his eyes fixed on the track.

I saw a chute last winter, partially artificial but heightening very steep ground, where the tobogan ran nearly eighteen hundred feet before it began to "slow;" and another, two hundred feet shorter, where the slide ran through a wood on a slight curve, which, if less safe, was more picturesque. The boarded sides about a foot high, which are necessary on artificial slides to prevent tobogans going over, give the effect of a sluiceway, and the Slide or Chute at Government House, Ottawa, is indeed a king among sluiceways, so long and wide is it, so smooth and carefully prepared. Here as near other well-built slides a long rough wooden stairway is constructed, which mounts the ascent parallel with the "chute," and on a lofty framework too, a border on one side just wide enough to fit a tobogan. This stairway and border meet a wide landing at the top of the Great Slide, so that, their rapid descent accomplished, each toboganer (with his companions) mounts the stairway, the tobogan drawn by its loop after him and close at his heels on the smooth border, until he reaches the landing so high in the air, and preparations are immediately made for a fresh start. Thus crowds move regularly on, some toiling up, some rushing down.

Especially is this scene made attractive on bright winter afternoons when their Excellencies are "At Home," and the announcement "Toboganing and Skating" is inscribed on a corner of the invitation card. On these festive occasions, besides the gay crowd of toboganers, two large, open-air rinks are crowded with costumed skaters, who perform all sorts of evolutions, dance quadrilles and lancers, waltz, cut graceful figures, and, above all, execute a march in perfect time, and drill with manœuvres very similar to those performed in a "musical ride." Loud and gay music goes on all the time. Sometimes a maypole is fixed in the centre of the larger rink, from which hang brightly coloured ribbons some fifteen feet long. Assembling about this, sixteen of the best skaters, forming a set of eight, partners facing, and about four feet apart, start off altogether at a given sign, and on the so-called "Dutch roll" skate step, by a dexterous interweaving, plait the ribbons until drawn within a short distance of the pole by the ever-lessening ends, when, at another signal, all stop, and reversing, unplait the ribbons, which, falling loosely once more, are by another figure twisted neatly round the pole.

An annual midnight fête at Government House about Christmas time is particularly attractive, if the weather be fine and the cold not extreme. Then the little valley and the dark, sleeping woods around flush crimson in the glare of two enormous bonfires, near which the "music" sits with circled stands on the snow. Engine headlights, placed at intervals, pour their white shafts of dazzle far and wide. Thousands of Chinese lanterns glow in the air, and suspended on wires in double rows encircle each crowded rink, outline also both slide and stairway, and dance in vistas under the purple night sky. Great is the fun and merriment, for all the world is there. Those who themselves take no active part in the sports sit in a much-windowed building overlooking the grounds, and watch the swift gleam of many shining skates, or the flight of descending tobogans as they dart—a flash of light and colour—across the snowy landscape, for sometimes the foremost sitter holds aloft a blazing torch which throws a line of fire over her red and blue companions. Presently rockets, Roman candles, and lights orange, green, and blue, dazzle through the air, and as they fade out, a belt of dark wood is seen spanned with a contrivance in gas jets wishing all there present, as I now wish my readers in distant England, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

AGNES MACDONALD.

## Oysters.



THAT most charming naturalist and genial observer of all things animate, Frank Buckland, used to say that oysters, like horses, have their points. "The points of an oyster are," he tells us, "first the shape, which to be perfect should resemble very much the petal of a rose-leaf. Next, the thickness of the shell ; a first-class thoroughbred native should have a shell of the tenuity of thin china or a Japanese tea-cup. It should also have an almost metallic ring, and a peculiar opalescent lustre on the inner side ; the hollow for the animal of the oyster should be as much like an egg-cup as possible. Lastly, the flesh itself should be white and firm, and nut-like in taste. It is by taking the average proportion of meat to shell that oysters should be critically judged. The oysters at the head of the list are of course 'natives ;' the proportion of a well-fed native is one-fourth meat. The nearest approach to natives, both in beauty and fatness, are the oysters of Milford in South Wales. The deep-sea oysters, such as the white-faced things dredged up in the Channel between England and France, are one-tenth meat ; while the very worst are some Frenchmen, which are as thin and meagre as French pigs."

Such are some of the points of an oyster. But we nineteenth-century mortals have but little time to observe and consider all the points of even such things as lie very near to our hearts (I speak anatomically, of course)—things fit for digestion. I have no doubt that by some, perhaps many of my readers, the "petal of a rose-leaf" and the "Japanese tea-cup" will be dismissed as mere poetry, and that for them the philosophy of oysters may be summed up in the one statement, "the flesh should be white and firm and nut-like in taste ;" that is if *nut-like*

\* "Natives" are oysters artificially reared, those found naturally being termed "sea-oysters."



expresses with any due adequacy so pure and concentrated a relish.

It is perhaps well for us that we are able thus to seize upon the points of real vital importance, and to eschew those which do not immediately concern us. We smooth our shirt-front as we dress for dinner, without concerning ourselves with such questions as how it came to be woven and stitched together; we step into our cab, and pity the poor devils we pass in the streets, but do not pause to consider their all-too-painful points; we chuckle with our host over the bargain he has driven, without deeming it necessary to enquire what the cheapness of some of our goods involves; we murmur little prettinesses to our fair partner as we cross the hall, without pretending to realize their meaning, if indeed they have any; and then we sit down to dinner and swallow our oysters, without any idea of how they came to be raised, and without realizing, perhaps without knowing, that they are complex organized creatures, instinct with life and motion.

Motion? Yes, motion. As I write there lies before me, tastefully disposed on its natural dish, an oyster in the form in which it glads the sight of hungry mortals when grace has been said, and they have taken their seats at table. With fine scissors I snip off a delicate slice of the so-called "beard" which constitutes the oyster's gills; and this slice I place on a glass slip, covering it with a thin glass disc, and then transferring it to the stage of my microscope. Would that you could see, my friend, the trembling, quivering, glancing life that is thus disclosed. The field of the microscope is occupied by the yellowish translucent material of which the gill is constructed. Across it run a number of closely-set parallel bars, and here and there between the bars is an elongated slit. Each slit is the centre of a little living whirlpool; for the edges of the bars that bound it carry a vast number of delicate microscopic translucent hairs, which are waving to and fro in ceaseless motion. The waves travel in one direction down one side of the slit, and in the opposite direction up the other side of the slit. Hence the appearance of an elongated living whirlpool. In the eight or ten square inches of gill-surface there must be tens of thousands of these trembling life-whirlpools, all of which, my friend, you suddenly engulf, with a gentle smothered smack of the lips.

"I suppose," says Professor Huxley, "that when the sapid and slippery morsel—which is and is gone, like a flash of gustatory

summer lightning—glides along the palate, few people imagine that they are swallowing a piece of machinery (and going machinery too) greatly more complicated than a watch."

In the paper from which I quote these words (*Eng. Ill. Mag.*, Oct. 1883), Professor Huxley describes in some detail the anatomy of the oyster. Thither let the reader repair, if so he will, for an account of the same. All that I propose to do here is to say a few words, suitable for those who do not like to be altogether ignorant of such matters, but have neither the time nor the inclination to be fully instructed, on the life-history of the oyster from its birth to its descent into the eager and expectant tomb.

I would that I could induce each one of my readers to examine an oyster. There is really nothing like actually seeing a thing. I don't mean to suggest that he should pause in the deglutition of his half-dozen natives at Scott's, or should waste threepence-halfpenny on the mere satisfaction of his understanding. That would be too much to expect. But I would ask him to expend a penny on a second or third-rate fish (he needn't eat it), and devote a few minutes to making out so much of its structure as may without the smallest difficulty be seen. I am not asking him to dissect it. All that is necessary is to turn over its parts with a toothpick.

First let him notice, before the oyster is opened, how tightly the two valves of the shell are closed. An oyster, if the shell be not chipped or otherwise injured, may live for two months or more out of water, especially if it be placed with the hinge uppermost. The water within the shell is thus retained in the most favourable position for keeping the gills moist. But if the shell be chipped, the water drains away or evaporates, and the creature dies.

The opening of an oyster, like many another apparently simple operation, requires some skill and is based upon previous knowledge. The hollow between the valves of the shell is occupied by the living mollusk. From valve to valve there passes a powerful muscle, the scar of the attachment of which is readily seen near the centre of the inner face of an empty shell. It is by means of this muscle that the oyster closes its valves with such a firm grip. To open the oyster it is necessary to skilfully insert a strong flat knife between the living mollusk and its shell, and to cut the muscle close to its point of attachment. When this is done, the shell gapes about half an inch

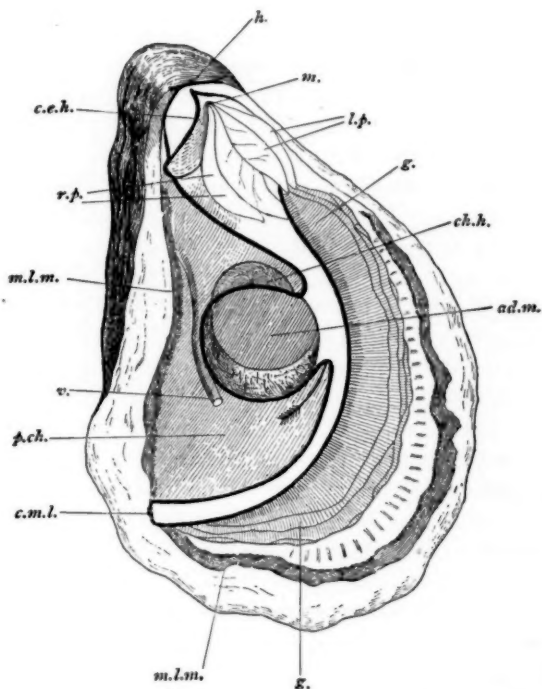
through the action of an elastic cushion near the hinge, which when the shell is closed is in a state of compression, but which when the oyster dies and the muscle relaxes, or when the muscle is severed, serves by its elasticity to force the shell agape.

When the oyster has been opened and the valve of the shell has been removed, then—unless the force of habit prove too strong and the mollusk be incontinently swallowed, for even a penny oyster hath its charms and its temptations—then, I say, the following points about its structure may be readily made out, and all the more readily if it be placed in a soup-plate of water. In the first place the mollusk will perhaps not occupy the whole surface of the shell. This is due to severe muscular spasms consequent to the shock its system has recently undergone. But in the living state, closely applied to the whole of the interior of the two valves, are the two lobes of the mantle, which are given off from the body as thin layers of fleshy substance, the edges of which are thickened and bear a coarse reddish-brown or dusky fringe. In the contracted mollusk, as it lies in the shell before us, the mantle-lobes may be recognised by their fringed edges.

Our next task is to find out which is head and which is tail in our oyster—or rather, since it hath neither head nor tail, its top and bottom, its front and rear. The hinge is at the top, the valves of the shell on either side. The oyster usually rests on its larger and more convex left valve, so that, like a flounder, it lies on its side. The hinder margin of the shell is usually somewhat straighter than its anterior edge. This and the shape of the shell will generally serve to distinguish right from left and front from back. But the front of the contained mollusk itself may readily be distinguished from its rear by the sickle-shaped gills, four in number, which curve round in front of the body, and lie between the mantle-lobes. The gills are often spoken of as the “beard.” And in addition to this fleshy beard there is also a kind of fleshy moustache, consisting of two flaps on each side arising from the corners of the wide slit-like mouth, which must be sought in front, beneath a sort of hood under the hinge. It lies in the vestibule, a cavity which extends for some distance above the body. The mouth leads into a coiled alimentary canal which terminates just above the hinder end of the sickle-shaped gills in another large chamber.

I am beginning to despair of the oyster's remaining so long uneaten. But if it be still unswallowed, the self-denying

# AN OYSTER.



The right valve of the shell has been removed, and the right mantle-lobe has been cut away along the dark lines which take their origin in the neighbourhood of the confluence of the mantle-lobes (*c.m.l.*), where the two lobes are fused or united above the hinder edge of the gills (*g. g.*). *m.l.m.* is the margin of the left lobe of the mantle. Below the hinge (*h.*) the hood has been slit open, *c.e.h.* marking its cut edge folded back. The mouth (*m.*) with its "moustache," formed by the right (*r.p.*) and left (*l.p.*) labial pulps, is thus displayed. The alimentary canal terminates at the vent (*v.*) in the posterior chamber (*p.ch.*) (the supra-branchial chamber of anatomists), which runs along the inner edge of the gills (*g. g.*). The arrow passes into the part of the chamber which has not been opened up. *ad.m.* is the adductor muscle for closing the valves of the shell. *ch.h.* is the chamber in which lies the heart, dimly visible through its semi-transparent walls.

observer will have no difficulty in recognizing the curved gills with their delicate radiating striations, will readily find the vestibule and mouth at their upper ends, and may pass his toothpick into the large posterior chamber which runs along the whole length of their inner edges, communicating with the tubes of their somewhat spongy substance, and opening widely beneath and behind the body. (See Figure.)

We have seen that on the sides of the gills and around the microscopic slits by which they are pierced, there are myriads of delicate, translucent hairs continually lashing the water. Upon the activity of these hairs the oyster depends for food, for oxygen, for very life. At first sight the oyster would seem to be in bad case. It is fixed and sedentary all its adult life. Its ancestors had indeed, like most bivalve mollusks that now exist, a fleshy foot projecting between the inner gill-plates, by means of which they could perform some sort of sluggish motion. But through lazy and sedentary habits the oyster tribe has lost, or well-nigh lost, this foot; the oyster has literally one foot, and that its only one, in the grave. This, however, is no very great disadvantage, for though the cockle is able to hop with some effect, the monopodal progression of mollusks would give them but a lame chance of a livelihood had they no other method of capturing their prey. The food of the oyster consists of such microscopic organisms and organic particles as float freely in the water. By the lashing of the invisible gill-hairs a current of water is set up which partly sweeps upwards along the gill-plates to the vestibule, and partly passes in at the slit-like gill-meshes, and thus through their spongy and tubular structure into the posterior chamber. Thus through the edges of the shell, and between the mouth margins, a constant current passes inwards; while an equally constant current passes outwards through the posterior chamber. The blood in the gills is thus aerated; the ejecta from the alimentary canal (and also the kidney) are swept out; and at the same time food-bearing water is carried to the vestibule where the myriad transparent hairs which cover the "moustaches" sweep the unsuspecting minutiae into the slit-like mouth.

I often wonder whether so tasty a morsel as the oyster itself possesses a sense of taste. Were Nature just, this sense should be well developed. One would fain hope that our sapid friend's fleshy moustachios may minister to taste; that for him too there may be some gleams of "gustatory summer lightning."



As a hope, however, it must remain: there is no conclusive evidence that the oyster possesses a sense of taste. Indeed it does not appear that Nature has been in any way lavish towards the oyster, in the matter of sensory endowments. Its sense of hearing has gone along with the foot, in which organ the auditory sac is lodged in less sedentary mollusks. Smell, or rather some sense by means of which it can test the incoming water, it may have. A sense of touch, distributed especially, it may be, along the mantle-fringe, is undoubtedly present. There are no eyes; but the dusky-coloured mantle-fringe is probably vaguely sensitive to light. For when the shadow of an approaching boat is thrown on to a bed of oysters they are said to close their valves before any undulation of the water can have reached them!

I have not been able to glean any anecdotes of the intelligence of oysters. The most favourable report I can give is from the pages of the Rev. W. Bingley's *Animal Biography*. "The oyster has been represented, by many authors," he says, "as an animal destitute not only of motion, but of every species of sensation. It is able, however, to perform movements which are perfectly consonant to its wants, to the dangers it apprehends, and to the enemies by which it is attacked. Instead of being destitute of sensation, oysters are even capable of deriving some knowledge from experience. When removed from situations that are constantly covered with the sea, they open their shells, lose their water, and die in a few days. But when taken from similar situations, and laid down in places from which the sea occasionally retires, they feel the effect of the sun's rays, or of the cold air, or perhaps apprehend the attacks of enemies, and accordingly learn to keep their shells close till the tide returns." From this it would seem that if an oyster be left high and dry he briefly considers his situation; if he deems it probable that the tide will rise and again submerge him, he shuts his shell and determines to hold out as long as he can. But if he thinks there is no chance of the tide's returning he gives way to despair, opens his valves and dies. As to his facts however, old Bingley seems to be right. Just as some freshwater organisms may be gradually accustomed to water with a greater and greater amount of salt, until they can live in seawater which would have killed them had they been suddenly placed in it, so may oysters be gradually accustomed to a longer and longer exposure to the air without gaping. And this fact is

turned to practical account in the so-called oyster-schools of France. But on the amount of intelligence involved in the process I leave others to speculate; for I am terribly sceptical of our ever attaining to much knowledge of molluscan psychology.

During the summer months oysters become "sick," and are then out of season. But the sickness is not unto death but unto life. For if a sick oyster be examined, the mantle-cavity and the interspaces between the gills will be found to be packed with a granular slimy substance, known to fishermen as "white spat," and disclosed under the microscope of the naturalist as a teeming mass of developing eggs. As development proceeds, the granules become coloured, and the fishermen then call them "black spat." Frank Buckland likens the spat in this condition to very fine slatepencil-dust; and he found from experiment that the number of developing eggs in an oyster varies from 829,000 to 276,000.

"One fine hot day the mother-oyster opens her shell, and the young escape from it in a cloud, which may be compared to a puff of smoke from a railway engine on a still morning. Each little oyster is provided at birth with swimming organs, composed of delicate cilia, and by means of these the little rascal begins to play about the moment he leaves his mother's shell."

The "little rascal" in some respects resembles and in other respects differs from its mother. It resembles its mother in having a shell of two valves, but the valves are smooth and transparent as glass; symmetrical, and united by a straight hinge. The mouth, which as yet of course has no moustache, is large and opposite the hinge. There are no gills. The shell is closed by a muscle similar in function to that of the mother, but different in position. But the most noticeable point of difference between the little rascal and its mother is the possession of an oval cushion projecting between the edges of the valves, and bearing on its edges the delicate swimming hairs by which the little embryo mollusk propels itself through the water amid its myriad companions, and enjoys for a while a vigorous and active life. By means of special muscles, the cushion with its swimming-hairs may be withdrawn into the shell, whereupon the oyster sinks.

It is pleasant to think that even the sedate and sedentary native enjoys, if only for a few days, an active, frisky, mischievous boyhood. In this it resembles the vast majority of bivalve mollusks. Our oyster is indeed peculiar in affording any pro-

tection to its young. Most bivalves, and even such near relations as the Portuguese oyster and the American oyster, are cast adrift so soon as they are born, and undergo no period of incubation beneath the mantle-wing of the mother. A curious example of a somewhat similar protection is afforded by the fresh-water mussel. The eggs in this case become lodged in the chambers of the outer gills. Here they develop into embryos so unlike the parent that they used to be regarded as parasites. They are minute bivalve shells, with triangular valves. The hinge runs along the base of the triangle, while the apex is curved round into a strong toothed beak. The small fry remain for a long time in the gill of the parent, the neighbourhood of fish such as perch or sticklebacks seeming to have some influence in determining their ejection. They then swim by flapping their valves, and ere long attach themselves, by fine threads with which they are provided, to one of the fish, and hang there, snapping their valves until they bury them in the skin of the fish. Becoming thus enveloped in the skin they there undergo a complete metamorphosis, by which they are converted into tiny mussels which are set free and drop to the bottom. This, in the case of the mussel, is Nature's provision for the preservation of the race. Were the fry hatched as free-swimming embryos, they would inevitably be swept away by the seaward current of the river, and the mussel, as a freshwater race, would be unable to maintain its existence.

The existence of the adult oyster is not altogether free from danger. What with sponges tunnelling in their shells, dog-whelks boring neat holes and sucking their sapid juices, and artful star-fishes waiting for them to gape, and then inserting insidious fingers, they have rather a lively time of it. But the short active life of the oyster-fry is beset with yet greater dangers. It is a sensitive little thing, and succumbs to the cold of inclement seasons. It is also a tasty little morsel, and is greedily swallowed by any marine monster that has a big enough mouth—for there are epicures in plenty among the marines. And when, tired of the giddy dance of youth, he would fain settle down into sedate and sedentary bearded oysterhood, it is but too probable that the inexorable tides and currents, of the very existence of which he, like many another gay youngster, was doubtless ignorant, have swept him out into the deep sea, or to some uncongenial spot, where he is choked so soon as he endeavours to settle.

The settlement of young oysters is spoken of by the fisher-

man and oyster-farmers as a "fall of spat." It is part of the business of oyster-culture to collect the spat, which may then be transferred to some locality especially fitted for the growth and fattening of the young mollusks. For this purpose tiles are employed, covered with a layer of chalk, which is afterwards easily removed, together with the young oysters adhering to it. These are placed on the bottom. But they are apt to get covered with slime, or to lose the roughness of their surface, and thus to become unsuitable for the reception of the spat. To obviate this difficulty floating collectors are now in some places employed. These are moored near the surface where the oyster-fry disport themselves before their shells become so thick as to weigh them down. Floating cars or frames containing seed-oysters are also sometimes employed with considerable success.

When they first settle, and adhere to the tiles and collectors, or to the gravel, dead-shells, &c., which form the natural collecting medium (or "culch," as it is termed), they are very minute. But they grow rapidly, and in six or eight months attain the size of a threepenny-piece, when they are known as "brood." The diameter of an oyster at two years is about two inches; another inch is added in the third year; after which the growth is much less rapid. At the Fisheries Exhibition, the South of England Oyster Co. and the Whitstable Oyster Co. showed shells of oysters which had produced black spat at the age of one year. As a rule, however, the oyster does not attain its majority until the third or fourth year, and produces the greatest quantity of spat from the fourth to the seventh year. The spatting season usually commences in May, but depends much on the temperature, being deferred till a later period in a cold season. In a warm lake on the south coast of Sweden—which forms a natural hothouse for oyster-culture,—oysters are found to contain ripe spat as early as the end of March. The spatting season may continue until the end of September. And one of the most curious facts in the natural history of the oyster is this: that so soon as she has laid her eggs the mother-oyster changes her sex and becomes a male. Whether this change of sex takes place several times in a season, and if so, how often, is not known. It is a curious arrangement: but, depend upon it, it has not been instituted by Nature without a purpose.

C. LLOYD MORGAN.

## A Christmas Cracker.



WELL, they call me a cheap cracker, and so I am. Not much wonder that I'm cheap though—and whose fault is that, I should like to know? They don't expect much feeling from *me*, I suppose, just because I look bright and make a noise, and wear a good deal of guilt on my outside; but for all that I have a beautiful motto in my heart, and a big pink sweet too. However, I'm not astonished at their blunder, seeing that they mistake each other in just the same way; and, for all I know, it may be a good thing: it would be a sad world if we could look into each other's hearts. But I don't see how *I* can be light-hearted with all I have to go through. I'm not speaking of my natural misfortunes; they can't be helped, though *they're* bad enough. For instance, men make heroes of other folk for one unselfish action, which is clapped all round; or even of beasts like Jumbo and Alice for eating buns and being stared at. But my whole life is an unapplauded effort to give pleasure to others; and though I have a soul which longs for love and success just as much as any man's or woman's, yet my one chance in life is my death, and then I'm scolded if I die damp; whilst my very death-bed isn't allowed its proper peace, but must needs be roughly torn to pieces by careless children in the midst of flare and noise. Still all this lies in my nature, and nobody can help *that*. I don't complain. I *do* complain though of such circumstances as have been made by men—society, I think it is called—but it means all of you who look at me, and crack me, and read my life. I don't suppose you know anything about them, or give yourselves much trouble to enquire. I don't accuse you of wilful cruelty—only of thoughtlessness; and I have a good mind to enlighten you by a true history of myself, so that you may know the Christmas angels who really make your trees and dress out your holidays.

Shall I? Here goes!

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## THE CRACKER'S STORY.

In Bethnal Green there is a street called Old Nichol Street, and in the street there is a low archway—so low, that only a child can pass upright underneath it ; and through the archway there is a dirty little court, round which stand tall, narrow houses, frowning down like sad black shadows of their old selves. For once they belonged to grand people, as you can still see by the stone carvings round the broken, blinking windows ; and once this court was crowded with lacqueys in blue and scarlet liveries, and high-heeled ladies in satin, and lords who bowed to them very low. On the right-hand side there is one house narrower and blacker than all the rest. It has no staircase—only a rickety, dirty ladder, so slippery, that you can hardly keep steady upon it ; and if you go right up it, through the pitch-black darkness, to the very top, you will come to a door which never quite shuts—partly owing to age and rusty hinges, and partly to an uncleared heap of dust and fluff, cabbage-stalks and fish-bones, which stands in its way.

The East wind came whistling through it one morning in early December. It was only half-past four ; but the inmates of the room were all astir, save one—a thick, square man, who had thrown himself, rags and all, on the dirty crumpled bed, and lay there in heavy sleep. His wife, a white, shrunken woman, whose pale skin clung shred-like to her sharp bones, had been up all night at her tailoring. She had had no work for a week, and last evening an order had come in, with a message that it would be no good taking it if it were not ready by eight o'clock next morning. She was sitting crumpled up over it now with dim eyes, round which the great marks seemed to grow redder, and the shadows blacker, every moment. Trouser work was her trade, and she was just finishing her fourth pair.

"Lor', I wish some o' them Horginyzations 'ud lend me cash for hirin' out a machine," she moaned. "Last time I went to the Eye Orspital they told me if I went on tailorin', a month more 'ud make me blind, and the pain in my eyes gets wurser every minute."

"You cheer up, mother !" said Kate, the eldest girl, who was patting her fringe down over her nose with a hand as black as her threadbare skirt. "One moment more and I'll make yer some tea afore I starts for business. Besides, at any rate it 'll

make a extra shillin' or two to stave off old Brown from turnin' us out for the rent. It 'ud be cruel cold in the streets this weather, unless we went to the workus."

"Never, while I'm alive, though I'm near broke. I've been at it this fourteen year and now I'm snappin' up. Why, what I make by *these* won't near satisfy Brown. Thruppence a pair, and the gimp and linin' and tape to find out o' that. That's only sixpence clear for all the five pair—twenty blessed hours' stitching. It's cruel work, cruel! Ain't yer goin' to wash, this mornin', Kate?"

"Can't! Water's froze," said Kate—"I'm off now, or I'll be turned off—they're so pertikeler at sweet-makin' near Christmas time. Lor, I'd like to eat some myself!" and she was gone.

The two boys had started before. They slept in the corner with a smaller brother—but the parents and the Baby and Kate and the other girls all slept on the bed where the father still lay. If times went on being so bad, they would have to pawn that too. All the rest of the furniture and chattels had gone, except one chair with three legs, a broken pink and white cup for the tea, and an almanac for 1870 which hung half-tattered from the wall, with a picture of a lady with long curls and a wreath of roses at the top. Susie, the other girl, was sitting sullen, shivering and hunched up in the corner, with the Baby in her lap.

"Here, Susie; take a sip of tea now, and keep the rest for your father. We can't make no more to-day, seein' we ain't got nothink to keep the fire in. Don't answer 'im if he wakes up in his drink, and mind Tim and the Baby. I'm gone out with the work and to see for some more;" and, taking down her worn rag of a crape bonnet, from which hung mournful bunches of huge black jet cherries, she prepared to start. "Mind the Baby, remember," she repeated to the still silent Susie.

"All right, you leave 'im to me," was her only answer.

"It's a pity you're made all wrong and sich a cripple," remarked her mother, "or you might be useful."

A sullen look came over the girl's wizened, distorted face. She scowled, but said nothing, and her mother went out.

Presently the heavy form on the bed began to roll over, and its owner raised himself and asked the hour, stretching his mouth in a wide yawn the while. "Oh, it's only you, Hunchy-Back, is it?" he snarled in husky, sodden tones; "guv me my tea, will yer, and look sharp! Look sharp, d'yer ear!" he screamed

shaking her by the shoulder. "Where's the use of yer, if yer don't? you great lumping, ugly cripple, yer!"

She answered nothing, but doggedly fetched him his tea, and stood near the cowering children whilst he drank it. "Run into the yard and play, Tim," she said to the little boy, and he went. Her father stumbled against the Baby and kicked it with an oath. Suddenly Susie's whole face changed. A gleam was lit there, which gave life to all her features.

"You dare do that again," she cried, and pushed him away with her feeble hands. Coward-like, he slunk out of the door, afraid of the flame he had kindled, and left her to comfort the screaming child. All roughness of voice and movement vanished as she stooped to pick it up. She was alone with it now, and there was no need to hide the feeling of which, before others, she was half ashamed. As she stood, pressing it to her breast, its head against her shoulder, and crooning to it as she rocked backwards and forwards, her whole being became illuminated. A tender smile played round her lips and shone in the depths of her brown eyes, and "Cripple Sue," whom most folk knew as a half daft, sulky jade, and who was commonly called the "vixen" in Old Nichol Street, had turned, by that magic which none can explain, into a tender Madonna, round whose head one could almost see a great light. For the child loved *her* whom no one else loved; it was helpless and wanted *her*, whom no one else wanted, and was not this enough reason? She had never cared or been cared for, before the Baby was born. The other children had not taken to her nor she to them, and nobody, not even she herself, had dreamed of her but as a stupid, sulky hunchback, as feeble as she was sickly. Nobody ever trusted her with anything, not even with the change for the milk; and she only did all the dirty work of the family, and acted as general scapegoat and recipient of the cuffs and blows and insults which nobody else would take. Sometimes she would cuff back again; but she was not strong enough to hurt.

Then the last baby had come, nearly three years ago. At first she had taken no more notice of him than she had of the others. But one day, when she had been left alone at home to mind him, she had let him fall, and he had cried. Scared at the thought of her mother, she had picked him up and rocked him in her arms and tried to soothe him, till he actually ceased crying, and lay back with his head against her breast.

Then when she saw that she, who always failed, had now at

length been successful ; and, when she felt the little head nestling against her with such tender trust, a thrill of joy pierced her heart and shook her frame—her pulses throbbed ; for the first time—she *loved* !

And the love never left her, but grew more and more, as she found how much he depended upon her ; so that, away from her, he cried and would go to no one else ; so that she, stupid and deformed, was the only creature of whom he was fond. All day long she sat with him on her knee, all night long she hushed his wailing cries with a voice as gentle as any dove's, though her usual tones were harsh and grating. She paced up and down to soothe him ; picked up little songs to lull him to sleep ; collected coloured rags from the streets to make him smile ; and, as he grew older, went without food herself, that he might have more.

Nor did she ever talk of what she did ; before others she was ashamed of her love, and only showed it by the gentler look on her face. Her fingers, formerly too clumsy for the needle, taught themselves to make little garments out of nothing, when she could beg a penny or two from her mother, or tear a sound piece of stuff from her own scanty apparel.

The Baby grew up—if such a slow process could be called growing—very white and wizened ; and, though it was nearly three years old, it could neither walk nor talk—only at times emitting a rasping, guttural sound, which, well fed, would have blossomed into a crow, but Sue thought it the sweetest music on earth.

As she looked down on the little face now, it struck her that it was whiter than usual—that it had even turned grey. The poor head with its short harsh hair drooped lifelessly over her shoulder. Could it have been hurt in the fall ? Was it ill ? A dumb misery chilled her to the soul. She tried to rouse it, but it would not answer her even by its accustomed sound. Something must be done ! She would fetch the parish doctor—but she could not leave it ! What should she do ? At that moment she remembered that it was his day to visit a bedridden old man up-stairs—she would sit near the door and stop him as he went up. Presently the well-known step came up the ladder ; she went out and stood in his way. He was a big, burly man, always in a hurry, and totally uneducated. He looked at her impatiently. "What do you want, girl ?" he said.

"Please, sir, look at Baby ; I'm afraid it's ill."

There was such piercing wretchedness and insistence in her tone that he moved inside the room, took the child and examined it. He asked her a lot of questions, then he felt it all over.

"Lor, sir, you'll hurt it. It ain't Baby's fault—it's mine, sir. Punch me, please, sir—give it back to me, sir."

"Nonsense, my good girl; I'm not hurting it; I'm only doing what's necessary," he replied testily, and proceeded to tell her that the child was suffering from a disease with a long name which she hardly heard. All she knew was that, if it did not have food, he said it would die.

"Die! It *shan't* die!" she screamed hoarsely.

"Well, then, give it food," he replied brusquely: he was not unkind, only thoughtless.

"I haven't any!" she gasped.

"Work for it then!" was his only answer, without a glance at her stunted, crippled figure; then he turned on his heel and went.

She never heard him go. Baby *die*! Well, then, she must die too. She had no food for it; it *would* die. Die, die, die, the word kept tolling on in her brain. What had that man said? "Work." But then the other doctor had told her two years ago that, if she bent over any work, it would kill her in less than ten days, may be. But, after all, what did that matter? She would work. What did it matter? Nothing to nobody, except baby. Baby would miss her: there wasn't no one else; he'd cry himself ill. Well, somebody else would mind him. Then, at the thought of any one else taking her place, fierce anger shook her. *She* wouldn't give 'er life for that! But must Baby die instead? Stung by the thought, she jumped up and, on the impulse of the moment, called to Tim, who was playing in the yard, to come and mind the child; and, seizing her ragged ruin of a hat, she dashed out into the street with the one idea that she would find work before she came back. "Tell mother I've got work if I don't come back, and mind Baby, or I'll kill yer!" she screamed to the stunned Tim as she ran down into the court. She never stopped till she reached the Bethnal Green Road. Wherever she saw a placard in a window she went in to see if they wanted a "hand,"—for she could not read, having escaped the School-board,—and a "Room to let" or "Burials done here cheap" was all alike to her. But nobody wanted her. Everywhere she met with the same answer: "Who wants a girl with a hump when they can get one without? specially when there



ain't no character or manner of reference to go upon." On she wandered, though she felt faint from fatigue and want of food, and thought she must drop every minute. She had walked into Shadwell ; but her hope, which had been so bright this morning, was growing as dark and dead as the day. She sat down to rest on the ledge of a small shop-window. Mechanically she turned and looked into the blurred glass. Slung in the front to a rusty nail was a bundle of tawdry crackers. In a minute she had jumped up, inspired by a fresh hope and resolve. With the sight of them, there had dashed into her mind the address of an employer of "cracker hands" and the words of a "pal" of hers in Old Nichol Street : "It's the easiest work goin', Sue," she had said, "that gold-paper fringin' is, and the rooms quite warm—only the bits o' gilt seems to git into one's breathin'; but it's nice and smart, and you makes a bob for every twelve hours."

The employer, Mr. Turner, was really a "middle man," that is, a private employer of hands for his own work, which *he* received direct from a contractor ; he had what he called "premises" for his work-girls in the Minories, close by the staunch, grim old Tower and the still, slow river, who go on together the same year by year, and smile deep down to themselves at the change and fret all round them. When Sue had found his office, she stopped a minute outside the door to smooth her fringe back and try to straighten herself out, that she might look taller and, as she thought, more respectable.

Her heart beat as she faced him : a red man behind a desk, who looked as if he had one skin too little, and had tried to hide it behind his big blue spectacles. He had huge knotty hands, and she thought they looked as if they wanted to beat her. He looked at her aggressively.

"What do you want ?" he said.

"I want work. I want to be a cracker-'and," she said.

"My eye ! You ain't no bigger than a cracker yourself, and not near so much go," and he gave a hoarse guffaw at his own joke, which put him into a vastly good temper.

"I ain't big, but I'm rare and willin', and you'll want noo 'ands at Christmas, sir," she added, cautiously.

"You've done this work afore then ?" Her heart went down into her boots.

"No, I ain't, but I've watched a friend of mine who used to 'fringe' at 'ome, and I'm very 'andy ;" she never thought of

the lie, "and, oh sir, I'll work 'alf price, willin', if you'll let me! The Baby's ill!"

The employer was still radiant at his own joke. The unwonted offer to take half-wages also attracted him.

"Well, I don't mind trying you at half-price, of course, as you came without a reference from a business, and you ought to be very thankful! No need of a reference for *character*, I suppose, with a hunchback! 'It's a ill wind,' eggsetery," he remarked jocosely. "But hours is very sharp: half-past eight of mornings till half-past eight at night, and a quarter of an hour for dinner; thruppence for extra hours."

"I ain't got any dinner! I'd work extra then, sir."

"Not allowed; extra hours from half-past eight, P.M., till ten."

The next morning at half-past eight found breakfastless Sue patiently at her work. She was put to fringing. Very clumsily did her thick fingers move amongst the gold-paper snippings, and many were the cruel words and knocks she got for her mistakes. The room was very small—no larger than a ship-cabin—and some twenty hands were working in it, half stifled by the heat and the gritty air, which was filled with particles of tinsel and cracker-paper. Some were cutting and folding what seemed to the bewildered Sue like bits of lovely coloured glass, blue and red, and green and gold; some were snipping gold fringes like herself, and others were putting in the squibs, or working a machine that turned the crackers out gay and complete. She wondered what people used crackers for; to hurt each other with the fire, when they were angry, she supposed. Her back ached till she was sick; the pretty bits of blue and red, and green and gold got down her throat and gave her an odd pain at times, as if she were choking, but she didn't mind all that, or the hard words, or the "chaff of the girls about her hump," when she thought of Baby and how much fatter he would look for the food she would buy. When work was done and she had toiled even her extra two hours, then came the delight of shopping. What a lot of parcels one could have for a shilling! Then the limp home, then her child.

For three weeks she worked steadily on. I was the last cracker she turned out. She cut my coloured paper and all, for she became quite deft at the business after a week. She told me her story, as she was making me, or perhaps I read it

in her face, for crackers have eyes and they see a good deal before they go off. Towards my finishing, she told me that the doctor had seen the child again, and had pronounced him a different creature; that he was "pounds" fatter and could crawl—but that she didn't think *she* could last much longer—her back was bent worse than ever, and her breathin' quite orful and no sleep; and all her pains so bad, 'specially the one at 'er 'eart. After that, I didn't see her again; I was strapped up with a lot of others and labelled 'Merry Xmas,' with a painted card and a sprig of holly stuck across me; and then we were sent on to a Christmas Bazaar and disgraced for ever by having a  $\frac{3}{4}d.$  tacked on to our elevenpence, as if we couldn't be a shilling once and for all. After that I came here and have been hanging, bored to death, on this Christmas tree ever since,—Hallo! here's the holly! it must be Christmas Day! Yes, there are the children, tearing downstairs—now's my chance—there're going to pull me."

\*     \*     \*     \*

In point of fact in rushed Dolly and Daisy, seized on the poor old chatterbox, tore him off the tree and pulled him. He died beautifully, with a crisp snap; he was a very well-made cracker.

\*     \*     \*

At that same moment on Christmas Day, Sue was sitting alone, in the garret of Old Nichol Street, doubled up with pain, on the stool by the fireless grate; the Baby was strong enough to creep now, and she had put him on the dirty floor and was watching him, whilst a smile played round her lips, in spite of everything. Suddenly, what was this? For her, the black room was filled with a great light, clanging peals of bells rang in her ears; there was no more pain or scorn or weariness; her hump was forgotten; she only felt very strong and trembled all over with joy—for—could she believe her eyes, or was it a dream?—*the Baby had stood up and had made a step towards her.*

She gave a feeble little shriek and stretched out her hands, then a fearful spasm convulsed her, and her lips grew grey. "Don't—fall—Baby!" she said—and tumbled backwards herself.

The Baby cried first of all, but then it nestled close to her, and crowed. It could not wake her though.

The doctors said it was a curious combination of heart-disease and spinal complaint.

Like the cracker, she, too, died very well—but it was in utter silence.

## A Voyage in the 'Northern Light.'



DURING the winter months, all communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland by ordinary vessels is closed by the dangerous ice which at that time fills Northumberland Strait, and renders navigation impossible, except by specially constructed craft. Any one whom chance at this time compels to travel from one side to the other has the choice of two routes—one by the Dominion Government Ice-steamer 'Northern Light,' running as opportunity offers between Pictou, in Nova Scotia, and Georgetown, on the island, a distance of about 45 miles, the other by ice-boats between Cape Traverse on the island, and Cape Tormentine on the mainland, a distance of about 9 miles. However, it generally happens that no choice offers, for while the 'Northern Light' commences running as soon as navigation is impossible for the ordinary passenger steamers, the ice-boats do not generally start work until the ice has prevented the 'Northern Light' being relied upon for a daily trip. Roughly the steamer runs up to about the 20th of January, and again from about the 10th of March, till navigation re-opens, while the ice-boats commence about the 15th of January, and run till about the 10th of April, the dates of course changing with the character of the winter.

Being compelled to reach Halifax (N. S.) on a certain day, and finding the ice-steamer at the time somewhat erratic in her movements, owing to an immense and unusual quantity of ice in the strait, I determined on what is known as "the Capes route," my decision being influenced by the fact that the postal authorities had determined to use the same route for the transmission of mails. Accordingly, on 14th of January, I left Charlotte Town at 3 P.M., by train for County Line station, whence sleighs are procurable for Cape Traverse. The 31 miles being safely negotiated, a stay of an hour was necessary

while the sleighs were getting ready, and at 6.30 we (for I was fortunate enough to find a friend travelling the same way) left for Cape Traverse, the night being luckily brilliantly lit up by a moon nearly at the full. As ours was the first trip of the season, the track, which later on is plain and well worn, was at this time only existing in the imagination of our drivers, as the snow was lying in all its virgin purity so deep that only the top rail of the fences was visible in many places, and our horses had to stagger along generally well up to their bellies. This being the condition of the track, it is not to be wondered at that the thirteen miles from the railway to Cape Traverse occupied fully four hours, and as the thermometer was somewhere about zero, we were, in spite of numerous fur-coats and rugs, heartily glad when the lights of Muttart's hotel announced the end of our journey. Here we found accommodation for the night, and having learnt that there was every probability of an early start and a good crossing, we slept the sleep of the just, in a small four-double-bedded-room, through which the stove-pipe passed from the room below and diffused an uncomfortable degree of unwholesome warmth.

Seven the next morning found us up and eager to start, and a few minutes later the boats' crews appeared, and preparations commenced in earnest. The ice-boats themselves may be described, as far as description is necessary, in a few words: they are simply flattish-bottomed boats, 15 to 18 feet long, and about 5 feet beam; they are fitted with two keels, 15 inches apart, which, while the boat is on the ice, act as runners and convert her into a sleigh. For convenience of hauling out of the water and on to the ice, they have flat bows (like a Chinese sampan) carried well aft and this enables them also to take the water again more comfortably than would a boat with the ordinary stem. For hauling on the ice, a number of leather belts are fitted with manilla attachment to the thwarts, and each man of the crew, as well as each passenger, has one of these told off to him; these tow-lines answer another purpose, for should any one in dragging fall through the ice, the strap will bring him up. Everything being in readiness, a start was made from the house at about 8 A.M., the two boats being drawn by horses as far as the condition of the "board," or shore ice, rendered practicable, and after that crew and passengers in the drag-ropes hauled them over till water was reached. This dragging, even on smooth ice, is sufficient exercise to put the blood in



good circulation, and do away with the necessity for any extra clothing, care, however, being taken to protect the nose and ears.

At the edge of the board ice, we found the tide running past at about a knot an hour, but the clumpets of ice passing at the same time gave quite a novel experience, making one feel, for a second or so, quite giddy ; however, the "Captain" launched us out, and the four boatmen taking their places, away we pulled, the skipper very cleverly availing himself of the lanes of water to make progress as nearly in the required direction as possible. When no passage appeared, out jumped the bowman, painter in hand, on to the ice, then followed the crew and last of all the passengers, and all being once more harnessed, away we go again, over the field ice till water once again compels us to take to the boat. On smooth ice the boat goes along easily and rapidly enough, but where big pieces (clumpets) have been piled one upon another, the labour is hard and the progress slow. The hardest work is getting the boat through what is called "lolly," a composition of half-frozen water, mixed with half-melted snow, with an occasional floating cake of ice, the whole packed too closely together to render pulling practicable, yet not firm enough to bear a man's weight ; through this it is only possible to make way very painfully and slowly with boat-hooks and paddles, and the lolly is consequently the bug-bear of the passage ; we were lucky enough to get over with a good deal of open water, and not much lolly, as our journey was accomplished in three and a half hours to the board ice on the mainland shore.

The passage, as a rule, is made in about four hours, sometimes, however, taking six or seven or more, and much less frequently taking a little over two hours. The board ice on this side was very heavy, big clumpets sticking up everywhere, with the intervening space filled with soft snow several feet deep, and here one may get pretty severe bruises from slipping through the snow till the shin-bone brings one up on the sharp edge of a piece of blue ice. The only danger in crossing on a fine day is from frost-bite, or getting wet through falling through the ice ; but as a rule care will prevent the former, while the latter is guarded against by keeping one hand on the gunwale of the boat, while tracking and standing by to throw the weight on to the boat should the ice appear treacherous.

We arrived at Cape Tormentine about noon, and here we had a

somewhat rough but very welcome meal preparatory to another sleigh drive of 40 miles to Amherst, the nearest station on the Intercolonial line. About 17 miles from Cape Tormentine a stay is made at Port Elgin to change horses, and the whole journey from the Cape to Amherst occupied about seven hours. We arrived at the latter place about 8 P.M., just in time to escape a very heavy rain storm, which lasted three days. As we took train here the novelty of the journey ceases, to be resumed on our arrival at Pictou for our trip by the 'Northern Light' to Georgetown.

Since taking the above trip I have made another crossing, and in the interval some very important improvements have taken place. The Prince Edward Island Railway now runs down to Cape Traverse, and the whole journey from Charlotte Town takes two hours. A very fair hotel, the Lansdowne, has been built there, affording good accommodation. On the mainland again a line is contemplated, I think partly graded from Cape Tormentine to Amherst, and when this is completed the Capes route will have lost one of its greatest terrors, a cold sleigh drive of 40 miles. As to the actual crossing, the accidents are very few and very far between. Thirty years ago a party was out, I think, three days, and at last made the mainland nearly opposite Charlotte Town, one man, a young medical student, having died; while another, now a popular medical man in Charlotte Town, lost both feet at the instep from frost-bite. In January 1885 three boats left Cape Traverse, and, being caught in an easterly snow storm, had to remain out all night on a pan of ice, with the temperature at 16 deg. below zero. They burnt one boat and a bag of newspapers, and finally landed late on their second afternoon. Of these men few escaped without some injury—one man lost both hands and feet, while others lost fingers, toes, or portions of hands or feet. Still I believe I am right in saying no mail has ever been lost, and this speaks volumes for the skill and pluck of these men who, during the hardest months of the winter, form the only link between Prince Edward Island and the main.

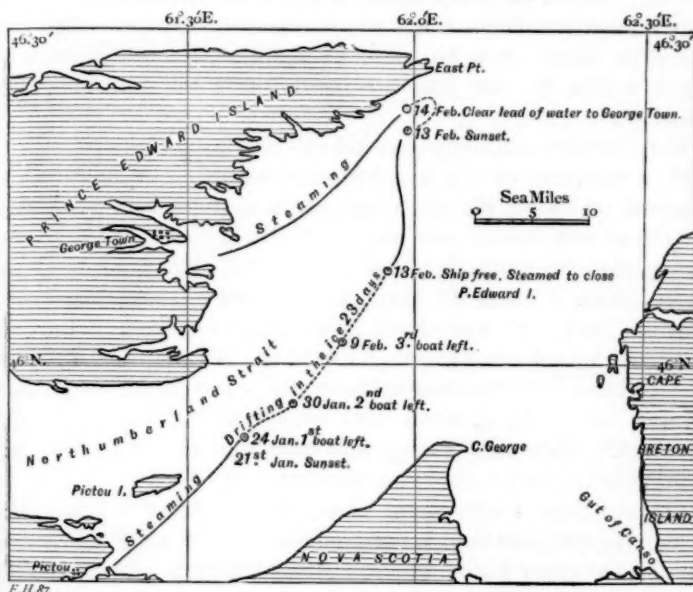
On my return journey I arranged to go by the ice-steamer from Pictou in Nova Scotia, to Georgetown on Prince Edward's Island. When I arrived at Pictou I found that the 'Northern Light' had not come in, and I had to wait there five days for her. The heavy rain, which commenced just after our arrival at Amherst, had at Pictou, and in fact all over Nova Scotia, caused

such a "silver thaw" as had not been known for five-and-twenty years. The rain falling at a very low temperature, had frozen on everything as it fell, and the telegraph wires particularly presented a most unusual spectacle, as they had a coating of at least half an inch of clear ice, the wires themselves being plainly visible like the thread as seen in a string of crystal beads. All along them, too, were small pendant icicles, and the weight of this collection of ice was in many places so great as to break the wires. Near Pictou there is a road running between large willows, and as every tiny twig had its coating of ice, the effect, as one drove through with the setting sun glinting upon these thousands of little mirrors, was one of singular beauty, an effect that the proprietors of ornamental trees will be indeed sorry to see repeated, as the broken branches which strewed the roads showed how disastrous this silver thaw had been.

At last, on the 20th of January, the steamer arrived, and that same evening we went on board to be ready for an early start. I was lucky enough to get a cabin, a matter of some little difficulty, as, owing to the delay, passengers had been collecting at Pictou for a week back; so that, when we came to count heads, it was found that we had forty-seven passengers, while the vessel only afforded sleeping accommodation for eighteen, so that the majority had to sleep where they could, some on the saloon deck, some on the tables and lockers, and "others elsewheres," as Punch's cabman has it. Of the forty-seven passengers, five were women, and one a baby girl of eighteen months, the private property of the writer; in fact my business in Halifax had been to meet my wife, who, with the above-mentioned child and her nurse, were now on board.

At 7 A.M. on the 21st of January, we left the board ice at Pictou and proceeded on our way, following the lanes of water as well as we could, occasionally coming across fields of eight-inch ice through which the vessel had to cut her way. Into ice of this thickness, with a run of 60 or 70 yards, she can cut about her own length, and has then to be backed to ram the ice again and again till a passage is cleared. Working on in this way, we got on so well that we had a fair prospect of making the trip before dark, but about 4 P.M. we got among field ice at least 12 inches thick, and out of this no way was visible. The vessel was rammed at this, but the progress made was so slight, that it was thought wise to wait till next morning

CHART OF THE 'NORTHERN LIGHT'S' COURSE.



for a better opening. The shock with which the vessel came against this thick ice, was so severe that it was difficult to keep one's feet, and it most certainly proved the great strength of the vessel and the confidence of her commander, Captain Finlayson, that she should come out of these charges, made at full speed, altogether uninjured.

We had by this time arrived within about 8 miles of the island shore, and 20 miles from Georgetown, so our prospect was a good one. Next day (Saturday), however, we found her firmly fixed in the pack, and had to be content with breaking the ice round the vessel, so that should an opening occur we might be ready for it. On Sunday the 23rd, no opening came, so we had to make ourselves as happy as we could. This was hard enough, for the field had drifted much closer to the island, and the contemplation of the land where we would be was not cheering when separated from it by impenetrable blue ice. This Sunday is marked in my mental log by the remarkable fact, that a passenger with a fiddle, who had since leaving Pictou, played jigs, apparently without stopping even for necessary food or sleep, was compelled by his

ignorance of sacred music to maintain an unwilling silence ; but this so preyed on his mind that he remained up till midnight, when he recommenced his secular strains ; remembering that he, poor fellow, had no place to sleep in, it seemed hard to deprive him of his pleasure, so he was allowed to go on in peace.

On Monday morning (the 24th), the prospect being still as bad as ever, one of the two ice-boats belonging to the ship was lowered on to the ice and sent ashore with sixteen passengers (of whom the fiddler was one) and six of the crew, the latter being sent to bring the boat back. This party reached the shore, about 7 miles off, about 1 P.M., having started at 8 A.M., and all, save for some slight frost-bites, were well. The boat returned to us on Thursday the 27th. During her absence, and to raise our drooping spirits, we started games of football on the ice, using a small ball of old clothes for the usual "leather." The ship during this time was closely packed and drifting with the ice slowly to the eastward.

On the 28th a movement of the ice caused the ship to be heavily nipped, the field on one side remaining stationary, while that on the other kept pressing against the side. Remembering that the ice was quite a foot thick and was being forced on the ship by the movement of a field extending as far as the eye could reach, some idea may be formed of the strain to which the vessel was subjected. The beams kept up a dismal creaking and bent up in some cases a couple of inches, and the ice cracked with frequent loud reports, as, unable to force the ship, it gave to the weight behind it and piled in big blocks alongside.

The awful part of this nipping is the feeling of utter helplessness with which you see it. Nothing you can do with any human assistance appears likely to help, and there you stand, watching as calmly as you may the struggle between this natural force and that you have to pit against it ; you know either you must give way or the ice must, and you anxiously wonder which it is to be. However, after about an hour of this, the running ceased, the beams gradually resumed their normal positions, and all of us breathed freely once more, thankful to that Providence which had rescued us.

On this day it was deemed advisable, not knowing how long we might be imprisoned, to reduce our daily three meals to two, and these were not to include fresh meat, that luxury being reserved for the baby, a luxury, by the way, that she enjoyed



all through our detention in the ice, and to which I suppose she owes the fact that she came out of this adventure alive.

On Saturday (the 30th of January) the ice-boat left again at 7 A.M. with fourteen passengers and eight crew, the shore then being distant about 9 miles. This party was not as lucky as the first, for night came on before they reached the shore, and so they camped on the ice under the lee of the boat. Some of the passengers were with difficulty kept from sleeping, while others stamped monotonously up and down until daylight showed them the land, distant about 2 miles, with a narrow strip of lolly separating them from the board ice. This lolly was so thick, that weary as they were they found themselves utterly unable to force their boat through it, so leaving her on the ice, they all struck out with boat-hooks and oars struggling for the shore, and sometimes knee deep, sometimes up to their necks, and sometimes lucky enough to get on a clumpet sufficient foothold for another spring, they all at length came safe to land.

Of this party several were badly frost-bitten, one so seriously that it was at first feared that he must lose both feet, but careful nursing brought him through with only the loss of a couple of toes; however, he never was himself again, and died a few months later. The boat was afterwards recovered by some people from the shore, but she never came back to us, and we were much exercised about her, as the signal fire they were ordered to light on their arrival was never shown, and consequently we were much afraid that ill had befallen them.

The day after the departure of the second boat-load we had at 5 A.M. the heaviest nip to which the vessel has during her five years' work been subjected, and the iron beam running across between the boilers was bent and displaced so much, that on the ship's recovering herself, the beam drew its bolts and remained in its maimed condition, a monument to the severity of the strain. Another beam farther aft was also considerably injured, and after this nip, too, the vessel commenced to leak considerably, but not sufficiently to be dangerous, as the donkey pump could clear the ship working twenty minutes a watch, or two hours a day. The iron beam to which the ship's safety on this occasion was principally due was put in, I believe, at Capt. Finlayson's suggestion, after the ship's first season's work as an additional protection in her weakest spot.

All this time we were drifting slowly but constantly to the

eastward, and after another week's monotonous confinement it was determined to send away the ship's sole remaining ice-boat, and she accordingly left on the 9th of February with eleven passengers, of whom two were women, and three of the crew. This reduced our number to nineteen in all, or allowing for the three women, the child, and a sick passenger, thirteen all told to work the ship, and of these not one was rated a seaman. This last party started for the shore, then distant about 13 miles at 7 A.M., and they were out all night, reaching Georgetown at 10 the next morning; luckily the women, one of whom had walked two-thirds of the way, while the other insisted upon being dragged in the boat, were well; but some of the passengers and a fireman were badly bitten; the latter's bite I presume is mainly attributable to the nature of his occupation having made his feet tender.

Shortly after this diminution of our numbers, the ice ahead of us opened showing a long lane of water, from which we were separated by about 20 yards of solid ice and a "pan" or ice island about 50 yards in diameter; the latter we hoped to be able to move bodily. We commenced to cut the ship free, contenting ourselves the first day with sawing and breaking out the surface ice for 2 feet all round the ship, and hauling the broken pieces up on the main pack so as to leave the vessel clear; we also cut away the ice about 9 feet from her stem, so as to allow the ship to move her engines. After the departure of the last load of passengers we had found it necessary, or wise, to reduce the food allowance to one full meal at 1 P.M., and this with work on the ice from 7 A.M., was little enough. Working every day we managed by the 11th to cut a strip of ice out, relieving the pan or ice island already mentioned; this we afterwards started with screw-jacks and pinch-bars, and wind and tide moved it clear for us, so that now we only had the 20 yards of ice to clear away between us and a lead which extended as far as the eye could reach.

During this day's work, the writer, with his usual handiness, walked into a hole with an 8-foot iron bar, and, not having sense enough to let it go, he stood a fair chance of accompanying it below the ice; but the skipper's voice warned him of the folly of this proceeding, and he was hauled on to the ice a colder, a wetter, and, we hope, a wiser man. Every one but the sick man and the women helped, and, as the latter did the cook's and steward's work, these men shared in the labour of ice-cutting.

By the afternoon of the 12th of February we had managed to cut a passage 25 feet wide from the ship to the water, and so we tried the ship's engines. The motion of the vessel started the ice under her bottom, and it came up choking our canal. These lumps we got rid of at last, but one was so big that it had to be smashed up into three pieces before it could be cleared; and, as this lump took twelve men working hard an hour to move out, its size may be guessed at. To realize the nature of the work of clearing a passage, it is necessary to point out that the ice here was packed lump under lump below the surface ice, and was in many places quite 20 feet thick, though, of course, when the upper cake (generally 3 or 4 feet thick) was started, a good deal of the rest came up, but some pieces could not free themselves and remained partly under the surface ice and partly jutting into our canal. Of the lump we had so much bother with, I can only call it a small berg, which, when cleared, floated quite 3 feet out of water, indicating a thickness of, at least, 15 feet.

It was night when we had completed our passage and cleared it, so, although we had a good moon, we determined to leave her where she was till daylight. All that night it blew a whole gale from the S.E., and, as the ship's head pointing through our passage was N.W., we found it clear in the morning, and the wind had opened a good deal more water, so we got up steam. Just five minutes before steam was up, the ice on our quarter opened; but, unfortunately, the released field, influenced by the wind, swung right across our poor little canal, and after a week's labour we were barred again. Any one wishing to know what a sudden depression of spirits is, should try and fancy himself in our position. At one moment a straight opening to a patch of clear water of unknown extent, at the next all our hopes smashed—our chances of escape all vanished. However, it wasn't as bad as it might have been, for in a short time the ice again swung, our canal once more appeared, and, steam being all ready, our good ship forged ahead out of the cradle in which she had lain for over three weeks.

On we went through the lanes of water, making what progress we could and in any direction, so that we approached the island, for coal was now scarce, and our one object was to make the island board ice anywhere. By 3 P.M. we had worked up to within 4 miles of the island shore, but the loose ice, blown up from the south-eastward by the last night's gale, now lay closely

packed against the island board ice. One good thing cheered us here—namely, the certainty that now at least our island friends knew where we were, and we felt sure that every effort would be made to bring us ashore.

All Sunday afternoon and night we kept steam handy and availed ourselves of every opening; but still we were gradually setting towards the east end of the island, distant at sunset about 7 miles. What was to happen if the drift took us beyond East Cape with little food, little coal, and little chance of help from the island, I think none of us cared to look into too closely. During the night the watchful care of our skipper in availing himself of every chance, kept us fairly in position, and we hoped for good resulting from a strong N.W. breeze which was likely to set the ice from the island shore, and give us a chance of clear water inside. During this night the writer gave another instance of his peculiar handiness. The 'Northern Light' has often to steam astern with much ice in her track, and, to prevent accidents which might easily happen from her rudder coming in contact with ice during sternway, a strong clamp of iron passes round the drum of her wheel and is controlled by a firm pressure on a footplate near the helmsman. The writer, in the absence of the crew with the ice-boats, was at the helm and was perfectly acquainted with the peculiarities of the situation. Once, and only once, his mind was allowed during sternway to travel to the joys of reaching land, when in a second the wheel took charge, flew round, and slung the wretched scribbler of these lines violently against the opposite side of the wheelhouse. I said he forgot himself once; with this reminder of his fault it is not necessary to say that it did not occur again. Valentine's Day broke upon us fine and bright, and, to our great joy, showed us a clear strip of water bordering the board ice, and in this, with high spirits and thankful hearts, we steamed smoothly along at about nine knots an hour, making fast in the board ice at Georgetown at 11 A.M., twenty-four days out from Pictou.

As we entered the harbour we picked up an ice-boat, and I was surprised to recognize in its crew the very men who just that day month had taken me across the straits. The agent of Marine and Fisheries, alarmed for our safety, had ordered this crew up from Cape Traverse, to attempt the relief of the ship, as our provisions were known to be short. Four years later I crossed the straits with the skipper of this crew, and he said in

speaking of the incident: "What we wanted to see was the baby, and when they held her up we would have cheered, but we were too glad to see her alive to think of it." If their hearts were full, what were ours when at the end of this cruise, we said good-bye to those who had been our companions during a 46 miles passage of twenty-four days? To Captain Finlayson and his officers, we owe much, and they know our gratitude is theirs.

Perhaps the greatest personal hardship I had to undergo during this cruise was the deprivation of tobacco for a fortnight, and this is a trial, the severity of which, none who read this can understand, unless (being constant smokers) they have been placed in similar positions. My tobacco lasted about ten days, and as we always hoped to get out in a day or two, I did not cut down my expenditure until too late to make the reduction of any practical use in prolonging my enjoyment. After about a week of hopeless longing for the solace of a pipe, I accidentally heard that the second mate, who was ashore with one of the ice-boats, usually carried tobacco in his chest, and as he was the captain's brother, I tried to prevail upon our commander to examine the box. However, it proved to be locked, but my evident disappointment conquered the captain's scruples, and the bottom of the chest was taken off, and we discovered two fags of what under ordinary circumstances I should have considered unsmokable tobacco, but which now was a veritable treasure; brother smokers will understand how it was shared out and enjoyed. The memory of the pipefuls then carefully smoked will remain with me longer than that of any "Old Gold," or "Straight Cut No. 1" I've consumed before or since. Had we had more tobacco, I've no doubt our reduced allowance of food would have seemed more ample, for I well remember, how, when encamped for a lengthened period, as part of a shipwrecked crew, on a desert island in the Indian Ocean, the fact of our having a plentiful supply of the fragrant weed staved off the pangs of hunger, which naturally and frequently arose with an allowance of four ounces of biscuit, and half a pound of meat.

FRANK HASLEWOOD.

## A Counsel of Perfection.

BY LUCAS MALET.

AUTHOR OF "COLONEL ENDERBY'S WIFE," "MRS. LORIMER," ETC.

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### CHAPTER I.

. . . "Good, my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me : I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you."

DR. CASTEEN possessed in a marked degree the historic sense. Possessed it, indeed, in a degree so marked, that some of his more ardent admirers accredited him with positive genius. For it was not merely that his mind retained long lists of dates ; was packed, sepulchre-like, with the dry bones of great events ; with the names of long-ago statesmen, lay or ecclesiastic ; or with accurate tables of the reigns of dead emperors and kings. Dr. Casteen's insight and research carried him further and deeper than this. He had a liberal and comprehensive critical faculty ; a startling power of embracing, mentally, the whole of an important period,—of disentangling its conflicting moral and political tendencies, and of staking out with admirable clearness and ingenuity the navigable channel that, in every age of the world's history, has cut its way on sea-ward through the shallows, and sand-bars, and unsavoury mud-flats of rash action or unstable opinion, which have so often threatened to dam the stream of rational progress in human affairs.

Yet Dr. Casteen's talent, great though it unquestionably was, appeared to be only applicable in one direction, and that a backward one. His eyes—and tried, sunken eyes enough they were—fixed themselves steadily upon the Past, which interested and attracted him deeply. He very rarely, if ever, turned them upon the Present, which neither interested nor attracted him in the



least ; which, indeed—though the whole course of history might, on his own showing, be reasonably supposed to have led directly up to it—he declared, with considerable vigour of scornful denunciation, to be a period of miserable weakness, stupidity, and universal decadence. The consequence was that as Dr. Casteen moved slowly and wearily, but very surely—like all the rest of us, alas !—down the highway of life towards that somewhat grim and forbidding, though much-frequented, inn, whose creaking signboard shows a grave on one side and a skull on the other, he exhibited very little sympathy with, or consideration for, his fellow-travellers. It never occurred to him that the live dog, after all, is a much more immediately important animal than the dead lion. Towards live dogs of every degree, in fact, he was disposed to manifest a rather cold-blooded indifference ; even when the creatures were tender-hearted, and more than ready to lick his hand if he would but graciously pat them. Dr. Casteen wanted to work ; and ebullitions of tenderness were liable to strike him as tiresome and impeding. He really had neither time nor energy for them. Affectionate relations, even with one's nearest and—conventionally speaking—dearest, demand a good deal of attention and of leisure if they are to be cultivated with success.

Yet this unhappy indifference and slight obliquity of vision had not interfered very sensibly with Dr. Casteen's worldly prosperity. Would not have interfered with it at all, but rather tended to promote it in a practical and conspicuous manner, had it not been for a certain fineness of fibre which the man did, after all, possess. For he regarded his work as an end, not as a means, and was really too honestly and honourably in love with his historic labours to give much thought to the wages which the public or the Church might be willing to pay him for them.

One comfortable bit of remuneration he had, it is true, when still comparatively a young man, consented to accept. For in the autumn of 1853,—after the appearance of the last volume of his '*Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Biography, from the Martyrdom of St. Peter to the Council of Nicæa*,'—the then bishop of the diocese, finding himself deeply impressed by the value of that learned and ponderous work, made Dr. Casteen an offer of the living of Marston Episcopi—the richest in his gift. The parish was small as to population, containing under three hundred inhabitants—one of the still, sleepy, pastoral, Midlands shire parishes

where life moves with such agreeable regularity and outward decorum. The income of the living was both good and secure. For we speak of those blissful bygone days when in regard of clerical emoluments things were really what they seemed. When rents were paid without any disturbing demands for return or reduction, and when tithe was regarded as a divine institution, the justice of which not the hardest Radical imagination would venture to call in question.

This very eligible piece of preferment Dr. Casteen, as I say, had accepted. And through the course of the following thirty years a long procession of curates—estimable young men in the main—marched in single file, so to speak, across the parish of Bishop's Marston; reasoning as they went, according to their several ability, of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The rector, meanwhile, leaving the serving of tables and more active work of the ministry to his subordinates, sat in his book-lined study, accumulating masses of knowledge, which he subsequently distilled in inky, and, no doubt, intellectually refreshing, dew upon many reams of foolscap.

For thirty years and more the black procession lasted, Dr. Casteen steadily refusing further ecclesiastical honours. It is known that in 1864 he was offered the canonry, rendered vacant by the death of Archdeacon Goldingham, his brother-in-law. Mrs. Casteen, it may be mentioned, in passing, was a Miss Goldingham, eldest daughter of the late well-known rector of Slowby. And later there were rumours that Dr. Casteen might even have enjoyed the dignified repose of a picturesque deanery in one of our southern cathedral cities, had he not so decidedly preferred the solitude and comparative freedom from responsibility of his little Midlandshire parish.

Lydia Casteen, as a very pretty little girl of seven years old, had come to Bishop's Marston in 1853, along with her mother and the books, and the rest of the Rector's domestic impedimenta. She had, I regret to say, at the time when the reader is asked to make her acquaintance, reached the mature age of seven-and-thirty. Nevertheless there were persons who still considered her pretty. Mrs. Cunningham, for instance,—sometime her nurse, and now, in stout and florid middle-age, cook, housekeeper, and ruler-in-chief, always saving and excepting Dr. Casteen himself, of the establishment:—Mrs. Cunningham, for instance, maintained that "Miss Lydia was, and always had been, since she first took her, a baby from the

month, as beautiful, wholesome, clear-skinned, elegant a lady as you could want to see." And, allowing for much partiality on the part of this witness, it may still be asserted that Miss Casteen, even at the present period, was far from unpleasing to look upon. Her features were regular, her complexion delicate, if slightly faded; her skin of the pliant texture which on into middle-life retains its smoothness, and refuses to pleat and crease into hard lines. Miss Casteen's face and her whole manner and bearing were marked with a certain serenity; but a serenity rather of expectation than of accomplishment. There was a look in her eyes as of one who waits and listens, not eagerly or anxiously, but with a kind of chastened patience—a look, which on the face of a maiden lady, whose youth has passed, or is passing, away, possesses a charm of unconscious pathos and impresses the sympathetic observer with a tender reverence. What are they waiting and listening for, these dear, child-eyed spinsters? A revelation, alas! which may prove to have a good deal more of earth than of heaven in it, if ever it comes.

The look was very present, anyhow, in Lydia Casteen's face as she stood one hot July morning on the step outside the garden-door, her straight slim figure framed by the clustering, faint-scented clematis and *gloire de Dijon* roses that overhung the porch, while a small, bandy-legged, red *dachshund* danced around her in exuberant delight at getting out of doors.

The sunshine lay everywhere. But sunshine of the pale, ungenerous quality peculiar to the centre of England—namely, sunshine that appears to be filtered through an interposing veil of bluish-white crape. Behind her rose the square, white rectory house, and its three rows of sash windows. It was built about the end of the twenties, upon the sight of a less pretentious but very much more picturesque sandstone house, dating in parts from the time of Henry the Seventh. The first quarter of the present century was not precisely a happy moment of English taste. This may account not only for the squareness, and whiteness—partly, indeed, now corrected by a generous growth of roses, ivy, and other climbing plants—but, also, for the very unapostolic air of spacious comfort pervading the general aspect of Marston Rectory.

Under the lower windows ran broad borders, an edge of neatly-trimmed turf dividing them from the gravel path. Upon the other side of this path stretched a lawn dotted with flower-

beds ; bounded on the right by a high wall—on the cracked stone coping of which straggling plants of snapdragon and gilly-flowers had rooted themselves : and on the left by iron railings, dividing it from the churchyard, where the tasselled grasses grew rank and tall, half concealing a perspective of moss-grown head and foot-stones, tilted at all manner of uncertain angles. Just within the said churchyard grew a couple of large cedars, whose dark horizontal branches, sweeping low over the railings and the small iron gate leading into the church path, shaded the eastern portion of the lawn, making the flower-beds there look dry and barren. The house and church stood high, commanding an extensive view over an expanse of rolling, finely-timbered, park-like country ; an outlook in the foreground of heavy green, and in the distance receding into lines of fainter and fainter blue-grey.

A drowsy hum of bees among the clematis, Anne-Boleyn pinks, geraniums and mignonette ; a subdued rush of wings and twittering of swallows darting back and forth to their nests under the eaves ; a company of white and yellow butterflies playing above the flower-beds on the lawn ; now and again the rumble of a farm-cart or heavy timber-waggon along the high road on the other side of the wall, followed by a little drab-coloured cloud of dust, blown idly up by a sudden draught of hot, south-easterly air. And in the immediate foreground, walking slowly up and down the path between the bright flower-borders in the warm shelter of the house-front, a tall, spare, old gentleman, clad in rather rusty clerical garments—his shoulders bowed as with much stooping over books, his hands clasped behind him, his head poked forward and protected by a very large, soft, Panama hat ; a green silk shade fitting across his high, narrow forehead, and forming a little pent-house roof over his eyes ; and on his feet, though the gravel was dry as the proverbial bone, a pair of large galoshes.

This was the scene upon which Miss Casteen's eyes rested. She had beheld it very often before. For the last five-and-twenty years, unless the weather was aggressively bad, Dr. Casteen had walked up and down the path, from the boundary-wall to the churchyard-gate under the cedars, for half an hour, every morning at precisely the same hour. And almost every morning, for the last twelve years—since that one of the two bitter sorrows of her life, the death of her mother—Lydia had come down, walked with him and acquainted him with the

contents of the day's post. The scene was therefore extremely familiar to her. It had grown to seem part of the order of nature, like the ebb and flow of tides, or the coming of day and night—something absolutely fixed, and determined, necessarily recurrent, in a word, inevitable.

But to-day Lydia was sensible of a difference ; not in outside things but in herself. And it was this which made her pause a moment before joining her father, and watch him with a quickened attention, a mingling of tenderness and self-distrust. For she actually had a half-formed project of interfering with the order of nature ; and that frightened her a little. Lydia's life was one of many small pieties. Her conscience was sensitive. Her dread of wrong-doing great.

Still, in arriving at an understanding with herself, Lydia exhibited a certain force and clear-sightedness. Her intelligence was considerable, and her honesty was considerable also. She could not succeed—according to the habit of many excellent women—in making herself believe a thing just because she wished to believe it. And among those things in which poor Lydia found belief increasingly difficult was her father's affection towards her.

For as he grew older, as his mind lost its elasticity, as work became to him more fatiguing, by so much more did Dr. Casteen become self-absorbed, impatient of interruption, miserly of time. The day, for him, sloped towards the West, and a hard determination settled down on him to let no moment of it suffer waste. Lydia had lived in hope for a good many years now,—in the hope, cherished very sweetly and consistently, that some happy turn of circumstance might make her relation to her father a dearer and closer one. But the happy turn had not presented itself in any promising form as yet. Lydia's youthful buoyancy of spirit was failing, she was growing a trifle sick with hope deferred :—and this was the second bitter sorrow of her life. The situation had begun to weigh distressingly heavily upon her. She longed for a lessening of the daily strain, for a pause, a rest.

Dr. Casteen reached the gate under the dense shade of the cedars. He stood there for a few seconds, and then turning, came slowly back, his hands still clasped behind him, his head bent, his lips moving as he silently recited certain sentences to himself. His daughter, watching him, fancied that he planted his footsteps more uncertainly than he was wont. As he

came closer she noted the deep lines about his mouth, the worn, bleached pallor of his finely-chiselled face under the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat. He looked old, frail, chilled even on this sultry day. She stepped out on to the path as he passed, and walked beside him.

"The heat tries you," she said. "Don't you think perhaps it would be wiser to come indoors at once?"

Dr. Casteen did not raise his head; he moved on at the same slow, spiritless pace.

"I object to breaking through a habit, my love," he replied.

"Oh! but the weather has broken through a habit. It is remarkably hot. Hotter than we have had it for some years. Surely we may modify our actions, a little, in submission to unusual circumstances."

Lydia spoke in a tone of gentle remonstrance, which might have struck her hearer as decidedly engaging. Dr. Casteen, however, was not very open to blandishments. He answered in his habitually cold, inward sort of voice, and with all his habitual studiously careful refinement of pronunciation.

"The blind unreasoning motions of the weather are hardly a safe guide for intelligent human beings in matters of conduct. It should rather, in my opinion, be our aim to oppose an unchanging constancy of purpose to the unceasingly changeable aspects of the external world. The day, I grant you, is warmer than has, for some time now, been customary: but I cannot permit that fact to deter me from taking my prescribed amount of exercise. To permit it so to deter me would be to exhibit a weakness of will, to exhibit, indeed, a tendency towards that common but most insidious curse and canker of modern life, indolence."

"There is a very old proverb, though, about the danger of keeping the bow always strung," Miss Casteen said, still in a tone of gentle remonstrance.

"That danger appears to me less than the alternative one—the danger, I mean, under a plea of bodily lassitude of yielding to mental sloth."

"Ah! that is the last danger one need fear for you, dear papa," said Lydia, softly.

For a time they paced on in silence. Dr. Casteen's lips had begun to move again in voiceless recitation, and he was nearing the edge of the wide shadow cast by the cedars once more when his daughter spoke.



"The proofs have come," she said.

Dr. Casteen stopped abruptly. For the first time he raised his head. There was a sudden gleam of eagerness, as of some strange, intellectual greed in his pale, sunken eyes.

"Ah!" he said, almost quickly—"and you opened them?"

"Yes. I only had time to glance at them before coming out."

"But the foot-notes?" he enquired, still looking up.

"They are printed in a double column as you wished."

"That is well," Dr. Casteen remarked, poking his head forward again and resuming his walk.

"What number of pages has been forwarded?" he asked presently.

"About a hundred and twenty, I think. That carries us down to the year 316, and the commission issued to Ælius—about two-thirds of the way through the Donatists."

Dr. Casteen pulled the green shade lower over his eyes with a trembling, slightly irritable movement. His hands were long-fingered and narrow—effeminate, scholarly hands.

"The printers are sadly dilatory," he said. "I had counted, not unreasonably as I think, on receiving the whole of that section to-day. I cannot correct conveniently, with security and a sense of satisfaction to myself, unless I have the whole section before me. I shall be doing the work an injustice if I attempt to deal with it in this fragmentary form."

"The rest may come to-morrow," Lydia said, soothingly.

But Dr. Casteen resented the attempt at consolation. He looked up once more, and spoke with an increased coldness of tone.

"You know, my dear Lydia, as well as I do that it is a very rare occurrence for me to receive a consignment of proofs on two consecutive days."

"If they don't come to-morrow I must write then and remonstrate," Lydia said.

"You will oblige me by so doing."—Dr. Casteen clasped his hands behind him again.—"Still a day must inevitably be lost; and in the present condition of the work I deeply regret the loss of a day."

Lydia during the above conversation had been trying to muster enough self-confidence to make a certain little statement. The statement was, on the face of it, a sufficiently innocent one, yet it made a very sensible demand on her courage. For when it came to personal matters Lydia was aware that she stood in awe

of her father. His strange aloofness from the common affairs of daily life, and his absence of interest in them, made them appear, when she attempted to speak to him of them, utterly trivial and contemptible.

"I had a letter from Mrs. Denison this morning," she said at last, after a long pause.

"Indeed. Mrs. Denison has always shown herself a most amiable friend, considerate of your pleasure in many ways."

"Yes, she has been wonderfully good to me," Lydia replied, with a pretty kindling of gratitude. "And so has Mr. Denison. He gave me Rosencrantz, you remember."

"Ah—the little dog. Yes, precisely.—You tell me that the foot-notes and references are arranged as I directed in a double column?"

"Yes, and they look much better so, they are much clearer."

Lydia found her father's last speech far from encouraging; but discouragement stimulated in her a slight spirit of opposition. She resolved to go on.

"I am afraid Mrs. Denison has been very far from well," she said. "She tells me her doctor recommends change. I think the whole business of the election and Mr. Denison losing his seat was a great trial and disappointment to her—she has never really been quite well since. They are going abroad for a month or six weeks, perhaps for longer. Layton is to be shut up. They will, probably, not come down there at all this year."

"You will regret that, my love," Dr. Casteen said.

He strove, out of self-respect, to be courteous, even when matters of tediously slight interest were brought under his notice. Then he added:—

"I will take this opportunity of reminding you that the references will require most careful verification. That is a mechanical labour which can happily be prosecuted independent of the context. The fact of our not having the whole of the section before us need not therefore prevent your applying yourself to this work of verification without delay. I shall be obliged, my love, by your commencing it to-day—that is, of course, if it is entirely convenient to you to do so."

Lydia turned her head, and gazed away over the wide expanse of rolling, grey-green, sunny country with a rather peculiar smile.

"Has it ever been otherwise than entirely convenient yet, papa?" she asked quietly.

Dr. Casteen clasped and unclasped his long-fingered hands uneasily. He was vaguely sensible that his daughter's question conveyed a distant hint of reproach. It agitated and annoyed him.

"I am quite innocent of any intention to suggest an implication of unwillingness on your part, my dear Lydia," he said, still poking his head forward and walking slowly along the path. "I know, and I sincerely rejoice in knowing, that the thorough and at the same time progressive education, which I have striven to give you, has not only fitted you, in a degree remarkable in one of your sex, to act as my amanuensis; but that it has also conferred upon you the power of taking a real interest in the work upon which I am engaged at the present time. During the period on which we are now entering—namely, while the first volume of my work is passing through the press—I count on your assistance as on something intrinsically valuable to me. I believe that you may, and will, yield me effective service—service rendered necessary by this unhappy affection of my eyesight. And I believe, further, that you will render that service in a cheerful and docile spirit; referable in part, no doubt, to your sense of filial obligation, but in still greater measure to the intelligent, and I may add appreciative, interest which your training has enabled you to bestow upon serious subjects such as that now occupying our attention."

If Dr. Casteen's tone during the delivery of this formidable address was not notably urbane, it was certainly from no lack of desire on his part to make it so. He wished to pay his daughter a handsome compliment, and he honestly tried to repress a movement of irritation towards her for having expressed herself in a way which seemed to make such a compliment more or less necessary.

Lydia was not only a very fair Latinist and Grecian, she was also a very sweet-natured woman, quick to respond to every token of kindness and commendation. And now, whether she valued the compliment to her intelligence very deeply or not, she undoubtedly valued the effort which it must have cost her father to pay it.

"I am always delighted when I can be of any real help to you, dear papa," she said, very gently.

"Of that I am convinced," he answered—"convinced almost to the point of regret, at moments, paradoxical as the statement may seem. For I cannot help fearing that it is, according to the

habit of your sex, a somewhat exaggerated affection for the faulty, human instrument rather an unadulterated enthusiasm for the work itself that inspires your labour."

A sudden shadow seemed to pass across Miss Casteen's face.

"Ah! you do not care about my loving you," she said, quietly, almost involuntarily.

It would be only charitable to suppose that Dr. Casteen did not hear the exclamation, for he paid no perceptible regard to it.

"The church clock is striking. We may therefore go indoors," he said. "I shall expect you in the study in a quarter of an hour, my dear Lydia."

Miss Casteen stepped forward and opened the door for her father. As she did so, she said, with a certain clearness and decision,—

"Mrs. Denison enclosed a note for you in her letter to me this morning. I will put it on your writing-table."

"Indeed!" he responded, in a tone of most discouragingly chilly surprise.

Dr. Casteen, notwithstanding his desire that tenderness should not be unduly lavished on the faulty human instrument, stood passive while his daughter, going down on her knees on the door-mat, carefully removed his large galoshes.

"I fail," he remarked, during the progress of that operation—"to recall any subject upon which Mrs. Denison can desire to address me directly. We will therefore lay the note in question aside for the moment; and I will request you to read it to me at luncheon."

"Oh! there's no hurry about it," Lydia answered, getting up again, her face slightly flushed. "But I think it will be best for you to read it to yourself, papa, if you don't mind."

Dr. Casteen drew the green shade down a little lower, with a nervous action of his hands. The wire, at the upper edge of it, left a narrow, red line all across his high, wrinkled forehead.

"You may not remember, perhaps, that I have been warned against the reading of manuscript as specially injurious to my eyesight," he remarked.

"Ah! but I cannot read you this," Lydia replied, quickly. "It would not be quite fair upon either of us—you will understand why when you have read it. Any time will do, papa. There is no immediate hurry about it. And it is quite short."

Dr. Casteen abhorred an ungrammatical, colloquial manner of speaking.

"You intend to convey that Mrs. Denison's letter is quite short, my dear Lydia, I suppose?" he said, raising his head, and peering out from under the shade with weary, sunken eyes.

"Yes, yes—I beg your pardon—the letter," she answered, with a sweet, apologetic little laugh.

Dr. Casteen, touching the wall at intervals with his right hand, moved slowly down the matted passage to the open door of the study.

"You assure me that this note is not immediately important," he said. "I will therefore postpone the effort of deciphering it till some period of leisure. In rather less than a quarter of an hour I shall expect you. And you will oblige me, doubtless, by then bringing me my mixture."

## CHAPTER II.

"It is plain that that Power which made the world foresaw the Evils in it, in that he has so exquisitely fitted us with Passions correspondent thereto."

In this country—a country of many innocent affectations—there has always been a tendency to proclaim gentility, or, if the word has too provincial a flavour, good breeding, by doing certain things exceedingly ill. The practice of penmanship would appear to be a case pre-eminently in point. To write well socially, you should write remarkably badly from all reasonable and useful points of view. Legibility is a mark of the bread-winning classes. Among the precious privileges of the leisured ones is that of being magnificently hieroglyphic.

Mrs. Albert Denison had a very high regard for the leisured classes, and an almost feverishly careful measure of social differences. She very well understood, in such matters, the value of delicate indications. And so her letters invariably presented something of a conundrum to the fortunate receiver of them. I mention this in partial justification of Dr. Casteen's rather snail-like slowness in mastering the contents of that lady's note. For three days Lydia remained in suspense. And during these three days she fulfilled her small round of duties in household, and parish, and towards her father's great book on the heretical defections from the early Church, composedly enough. For Lydia cordially despised the state of mind generally known as—being in a fuss. Suspense produced a little ache in her, and slightly accentuated the pathetically expectant expression of her charm-

ing eyes : but it by no means prevented her correcting proofs with exquisite neatness ; verifying references, from the pages of Optatus and St. Augustine, concerning the opinions and performances of those remarkably obstreperous schismatics, the Donatists, with laudable accuracy ; or otherwise conducting herself as though the very greatest chance of personal enjoyment that her quiet existence had hitherto offered were not at stake.

She carried her conscientious delicacy of feeling a step further, and avoided rather than courted an explanation with her father. The very strength of her longing that he should look favourably upon her friend's suit made it a point of honour with her not to bring any pressure to bear upon him. So she was careful not to find herself alone with him at unemployed moments. To loiter about, as though expecting some communication, would have seemed to Miss Casteen slightly contemptible. Hers, it must be owned, was only a day of small things. Circumstances had given her but scant opportunity, so far, of displaying the more dramatic and showy virtues. But there is an ideal of conduct, happily, in little matters as well as in great ones ; and Lydia was a fervent, though perhaps unconscious, idealist. She was profoundly in love with perfection.

It was Dr. Casteen's habit to drive for an hour each afternoon from three o'clock till four. During the heat of the summer this ceremony took place half-an-hour later. It was further customary for Miss Casteen to accompany her father. Occasionally, however, her place was taken by Edgar Morgan, the member of the black procession of curates just then wending his apostolic way through the parish of Marston. Mr. Morgan was an excellent young man, with large ears, a receding chin and a large bump of reverential admiration. He had, also, a good habit of rarely speaking unless spoken to ; and this latter rather negative grace rendered his society peculiarly acceptable to Dr. Casteen.

Lydia made this predilection for the young clergyman on the part of her father useful during her three days of suspense. It enabled her to avoid the dangerous *tête-à-tête* of the afternoon drive. She relished this hour's breathing-space and leisure. On the third day after the receipt of Mrs. Denison's letter, she devoted it to visiting Mrs. Threadgold at the thatched, half-timbered cottage, just beyond the small, squat-towered, sandstone church. The good woman had lately presented her husband the sexton with what is locally known as "an increase." And Miss Casteen,



who was very fond of children, found a singular pleasure in sitting in the clean flagged kitchen,—its door opening on a perspective of garden path flanked by lilac honesty and tall white lady's lilies,—holding the red, pucker-faced little addition to the sum of fallen humanity in her arms.

Yet, pleasant though it was, it seemed to sharpen the tooth of that inward ache somehow. It produced a deepening of her longing for tenderness and affection. As she passed down between the white lilies, crossed the quiet road, with its spaces of grass on either hand, and turned into the churchyard, she was conscious of a movement of sadness, of an impatience of her lot, of an impatience, too, of her father.

"It is not often that I ask for anything," she thought. "He must know I am growing a little anxious. I think he might very well have spoken by now."

And then, compelled by one of those quick reflex actions of a sensitive conscience, she immediately decided to ask Mr. Morgan to dinner, so as to give as little opportunity for speech as possible.

Edgar Morgan was one of those amiably disposed persons who never refuse an invitation. Then, too, an invitation from Miss Casteen had something of a royal command about it. Mr. Morgan was a very loyal subject. Indeed he may be said to have adored his sovereign. For though she was—I regret to say—a good twelve years his senior, the young clergyman had fallen a very complete victim to Miss Casteen's sweetness of disposition and to her surprising acquaintance with the dead languages. "She is a wonderful woman," he frequently said to himself. And then he became somewhat desolate in spirit: for he was well aware that he was himself far from being a wonderful man. And so when Miss Casteen, in the innocence of her heart, asked some small favour of him or paid him some small attention, the good youth went through many rounds in a purgatory of delicious agony.

However delicious Mr. Morgan's agony may have been at being invited to dinner that evening, Lydia suffered torments of quite another complexion before the termination of the meal in question. For her father was not in his happiest humour; and his conversation drifted into rather denunciatory channels. He dilated at considerable length on the degeneracy of the younger generation, on the decay of sound scholarship, on the intellectual flimsiness of the present day.

"There are moments," he said, with the accurate and refined

enunciation which gave such distinction to his speech,—“there are moments when the wide-spread existence of these deplorable evils is brought home, even to retired persons like myself, in a startling and painful manner. Sporadic germs appear to infest the mental and moral, just as we learn they infest the physical atmosphere. A diseased and morbid love of excitement, for instance, appears to invade even those minds which, from the serious and elevating influences brought from early youth to bear upon them, you would have specialized as peculiarly calculated successfully to resist such invasion.”

Miss Casteen moved slightly in her chair at the head of the table, and looked at her father with quickened attention. She had received a very unpleasant shock.

The candles had not been lighted, Dr. Casteen having complained of an unusual degree of discomfort in his eyes. The dining-room—its walls hung with a cockroach-coloured, flock paper, sparsely sprinkled with gold *fleurs-de-lis*—was at the eastern side of the house, overlooking the churchyard. Its windows were darkened by the boughs of the cedars. It was not a notably cheerful apartment even in broad day. Now, unlighted and dusky in the growing twilight, it was very sufficiently depressing. To Lydia, looking up suddenly, her father's face appeared as an indistinct, glimmering disc of paleness, a broad band of black dividing it into two unequal halves, against the dull surface of the wall at his back.

“He has read Mrs. Denison's letter,” she thought. “He is greatly annoyed. He will not let me go.”

Mr. Morgan murmured a vague agreement. He was a good deal occupied just then with the strawberries on his plate. He fingered them nervously, fearing the possible presence of green fly, which in the present obscurity, might pass undetected. He could not quite make up his mind to give up his strawberries; yet it was unpleasant to run the risk of becoming suddenly insectivorous.

“What can be more disappointing, for example,” Dr. Casteen continued; “what more, I may even say, humiliating, than to discover that one, whose intelligence has been trained with unremitting care and patience, and thus fitted for participation in the prosecution of an important intellectual work, is willing, at the briefest notice, to retard the completion, I had almost said to endanger the integrity of the said work, by deserting his or her post in the pursuit of passing amusement?”

"Oh! that would be very sad, sir," Mr. Morgan exclaimed. "But hardly anybody, I should think, would be so dreadfully frivolous as that."

Lydia saw her father's narrow, white hands move upward in the dimness, and shift the dark band across the upper part of his face.

"Experience, unhappily, often compels us to revise our opinion as to the possible limits of human frivolity, Mr. Morgan," he said.

Miss Casteen rose. She was deeply hurt, for it seemed to her exceedingly unfair to shoot at her from behind a hedge in this sort of way. But, even had she been disposed to take up arms in her own defence, it would have been impossible to do so now, before a third person.

"I will join you in the study later, papa," she said.

"Oh! I had better go," Mr. Morgan remarked, getting up hurriedly. He had a vague impression of having said something he had better have left unsaid, of having made a mistake. "I'm sure it's so kind of you to let me come at all, sir," he went on. "You can't think how I value the privilege of hearing you talk. But you must never let me be in the way, you know—unless I could be of any use, Miss Casteen? Perhaps you've something else to do. And, of course, I should be only too glad, if you wished it, to stop and write for Dr. Casteen to-night."

Lydia managed to smile at the young man very kindly through the half-darkness.

"You are always willing to be helpful," she said. "But I have nothing else to do. I am quite at my father's disposal."

"We will go then at once to the study," Dr. Casteen observed.

Mr. Morgan opened the door. For a moment Lydia hesitated. Then she went up to her father.

"The lamps are not lighted yet. You had better take my arm, papa," she said, gently.

"Thank you, my dear Lydia; I am afraid I must be so far burdensome to you," he answered in a tone of chilly civility.

As they moved slowly down the matted passage leading out of the hall, Miss Casteen spoke. Her heart beat quickly.

"I am afraid that you are very much vexed with me," she said. "I am very sorry that I should have vexed you."

"An expression of regret should always be accepted as kindly meant," he rejoined.

Lydia waited a moment. Then, as they passed on into the

lamp-lighted study, she turned to him, her face eloquent with appeal and pleading.

"Dear papa, pray do not treat me in this way," she said. "I am not unreasonable. I am quite ready to listen if you will only speak openly to me."

Dr. Casteen sank wearily into the large leather-covered chair by the writing-table.

"It would be disingenuous to appear not to apprehend the drift of your observations," he said. "But you must pardon me, my dear Lydia, if I do not at once respond to the suggestion contained in them. I am a prey to considerable physical exhaustion this evening."

As Lydia stood looking down at him, at the delicate, worn features and spare figure, a sweet womanly impulse prompted her to take the old man's hand in hers and offer him one of those silent caresses that often pave the way, far better than spoken words, towards the signing of a treaty of peace. But she really had not courage to obey the prompting. She feared that any active demonstration of affection would embarrass and annoy him still more. She could only say gently :—

"I am very sorry you are tired."

"I should not have mentioned the matter," Dr. Casteen continued, without noticing her little speech ; "but that, as I think you will admit, it justifies my refusal to enter upon a question, the discussion of which is likely to be disturbing to both of us. You will oblige me, therefore, by allowing the matter to rest in silence until to-morrow. I will devote my half hour of morning exercise to conversing with you concerning it. If you will take your place, my love, and begin reading, I shall be obliged to you."

Miss Casteen passed a restless night. She had never before been in open collision with her father ; and she was frightened at being so. It seemed to her almost impious to stand aside and judge him. And yet her sense of justice rebelled against the harsh words he had spoken at dinner. Surely it was hardly courteous, to say the least of it, to attack her thus when defence was impossible ? But that, after all, hurt her less than his entire impenetrability to her affection.

As the short summer night drew on, Lydia's mind worked with almost feverish intensity. In the small hours mole-hills have a nasty habit of swelling into mountains. Lydia's sense of injury expanded in this way, till it towered above her enormous as the

genius newly escaped from the bottle. But the sane and wholesome morning brought her to a calmer frame of mind. And she went down to breakfast with a feeling of shame upon her. She longed to see her father, and do penance for her sins of thought by unqualified submission to his wishes.

Dr. Casteen, however, did not put in an appearance. He requested that his daughter would read prayers without him, as he proposed breakfasting in his own room. Then submission ceased to be entirely unqualified. The sense of injury re-asserted itself.

Lydia went very methodically through her domestic duties that morning. She had begun to shrink from the interview that lay before her. And in point of fact her father walked twice from the churchyard gate to the garden wall and back again, before she joined him upon the gravel path. The wind blew gustily from the west, and the sky was overcast. The rather dreary peculiarity of Dr. Casteen's appearance was considerably increased by the fastening on of his broad-brimmed Panama hat with a piece of narrow, black ribbon—passed over the crown of it and tied in a straggling bow under his chin.

"Good morning, my love," he said. "I have been expecting you for some minutes."

"I was delayed by household matters," she answered.

"Indeed. We will not stand still if you please."

Habit is strong, and Miss Casteen was tender-hearted.

"I was afraid you had had a bad night, papa," she said, "by the fact of your remaining upstairs. I should have come to your room to inquire for you, but I feared you might not like it."

"It would be ungracious to allow that your presence is ever otherwise than welcome," Dr. Casteen answered, with self-respecting politeness. "But I must own that this morning I preferred solitude, feeling unequal to sustaining a part in ordinary conversation."

"I am not very talkative, papa. I can always be silent if your manner indicates that you are tired," Lydia said, a little quickly.

Dr. Casteen cleared his throat and clasped and unclasped his hands nervously, as he held them behind him. It was among the less amiable characteristics of this learned old gentleman that he had a remarkable power of putting other people in the wrong—of so twisting a sentence that he rendered reply practically impossible.

"During the last few days, my dear Lydia," he remarked, "I have, with great regret, observed in your conversation a tone of



asperity—an inclination to lay hold of words and turn them against the speaker—usually myself—to his disadvantage. This is unpleasing, I may add, ungenerous. I will ask you therefore, my love, to oblige me by noting this inclination and correcting it before it becomes habitual.”

Lydia flushed slightly. But she remained silent.

“Having discharged a plain duty in offering you this warning,” Dr. Casteen continued, “I will now, according to promise, discuss that other matter with you to which indirect allusion was made yesterday.”

Lydia could not restrain herself.

“It is of no consequence,” she said, hastily.—“Of none at least as compared with your comfort, papa. If you are tired, pray let us postpone speaking of it for the present.”

“This manifestation of irritability is as ill-timed as it has been, until lately I am thankful to say, unusual on your part,” Dr. Casteen answered drily, stooping a little more, as he turned at the end of the walk and faced the westerly wind. “Having made a promise I am bound to redeem it. I cannot perceive that anything is likely to be gained by delay. I must ask you to give me your attention, my love. I presume you are cognisant of the subject of Mrs. Denison’s letter?”

Lydia bowed her head in assent.

“She proposes that you should travel with her and her husband for a month—or more—on the Continent. She informs me that she has good reason to believe that you warmly desire to do this. But she adds that, so far, no direct communication has passed between you and her upon the subject—that she makes the proposal entirely upon her own initiative. Mrs. Denison does rightly, in my opinion, in telling me this, in assuring me that she is solely responsible for this proposal—that there has been no collusion.”

“Certainly,” Lydia put in quietly—“there has been no collusion.”

“Still I gather that you must, at some time, have expressed before Mrs. Denison, a desire for foreign travel?”

“Oh! that is very possible,” she assented, with a smile, and movement of rather pathetic playfulness. “When women are together they often express wishes for all sorts of delightful, improbable, impossible things, which they know will never come to pass. It is their way, papa. They are not very wise, as a rule, when they are alone together.”



Dr. Casteen cleared his throat again.

"We are wandering somewhat from the point, I think," he remarked coldly.

"You see I am only a woman,"—Lydia answered, still smiling, by way of apology.

Dr. Casteen moved forward a few steps in silence.

"This is mere trifling," he observed presently. "And as I cannot consent this morning to extend the time usually allotted to exercise, I am again compelled to request your full attention. I must own to you, my dear Lydia, that in your friend's letter I perceive an under-current of suggestion which is gravely disappointing to me. I can hardly suppose that you have given your friend to understand that the duties—some might call them privileges—devolving upon you as my amanuensis and, I may say, coadjutor, are distasteful to you—that you consider unjustifiable demands are made upon your time and energy—that you, in short, regard yourself as sacrificed to my studies and pursuits. I can hardly suppose, I repeat, that you have made complaints of the above description. Yet in reading the note you gave me I cannot deny that a painful suspicion has found lodgment in my mind. I need hardly add that this is profoundly distressing to me."

Dr. Casteen paused, as demanding an answer. For a few seconds Lydia hesitated. She was conscious of a struggle. But whatever protests might arise in her when alone, the inherent sweetness and tenderness of her nature conquered when she was face to face with her father.

"Dear papa," she said, "I have never complained. I think you are inclined to treat this matter as much more serious than it really is." They had just reached the gate leading into the churchyard. Dr. Casteen laid one hand on the top bar of it, raised his head, and, from under the green shade, looked with a strange hardness of expression at his daughter.

"It is serious," he said, slowly. "From a certain standpoint, I may say, terribly serious. For if you are willing to leave home now, it can only be that, at heart, you are wholly indifferent to the success of my labours. I can only suppose that the careful training and education expended upon you have been expended in vain—that they have left you shallow and light-minded as the majority of your sex. In that case I have cause to be deeply, bitterly displeased with you."

Lydia uttered a quick exclamation. The first drops of rain

were beginning to fall, and the wind swept roughly over the tall grasses in the churchyard, lashing them against the crooked grave-stones. The dark cedars, with their swaying boughs above her, the grey-green heavy landscape dim with wet, the bowed figure of the old historian, a harsh energy in his words and look, combined to form a picture which stamped itself in singular vividness upon Lydia's brain.

"Ah! pray, pray do not say that," she cried. "How can you say I am indifferent, papa? Surely I have never failed you; I have always been ready to help you. I have enjoyed doing so. Let us put this whole matter of my going away aside for to-day. It troubles you. We will not speak of it again just yet."

"I prefer arriving at a clear understanding with you at once, my dear Lydia," Dr. Casteen answered. "It is easy for you to remove all cause of trouble, it is easy for you to allay the fears that have been aroused in me. You are in a position to do this now and here. You have merely to inform me that you relinquish all thought of this foreign journey—such information will be the surest proof of the sincerity of your professions."

Lydia's first inclination was towards unconditional surrender. But the terms in which her father's demand was couched made it offensive to her. That he should suspect her, that he should exact this act of self-denial as proof of loyalty and devotion of which, for years, her life had been a daily expression—this seemed to Lydia almost intolerable. Her pride was touched. And then, too, as she saw all hope of her poor little pleasure departing, vanishing, desire reasserted itself imperiously. The whole matter may seem, to the enlightened reader, of the proportions of a storm in a tea-cup. But to Lydia the storm was a very real one. She could not let her pleasure-boat founder without any attempt to save it.

"Ah! that is too much," she said, pleadingly, almost piteously. "It is only a short holiday that I ask for—the inside of a month, papa—three weeks if you make a point of it. My absence would not injure your book. I could finish the Donatists before I go—the remainder of the proofs are almost sure to come to-morrow. And Mr. Morgan would be only too happy to verify references, and correct them for you if another batch came while I was away. And if you would let him stay in the house he could read to you in the evening and take my place altogether.—It is not as if you were writing. Then, of course, I must be with you.

But just now it seemed as though I might be away without causing you inconvenience. Cunningham could manage the house, you know. I would leave her full instructions. I don't think anything could go very wrong during so short an absence.—Ah! it is raining," she added. "You must not remain here—lean on me, papa—the wind is so high—let us go indoors."

Dr. Casteen, however, stood still, regardless of wind and weather, steadying himself by clasping the top of the gate with his narrow hands. "I am to understand then, Lydia, that you refuse to give me the proof I ask of you?" he said.

"Oh! pray don't put it in that way," she cried. "It is hardly fair—is it? I do not want to refuse any proof. But I wish you would not make it a matter of proof at all. It is only for a little while, dear papa, and I have been feeling dull and heavy lately. I should come home brighter and more able to understand your work and to help you. I have not been away for nearly two years now, you see—not since we went together to Bournemouth, after the bad cold which you had."

Lydia paused a moment; and then went on with a rapidity very unusual to her.

"Surely you can trust me," she said, "and believe in my interest in your work without further proof? What cause have I ever given you to suppose I complained to other people, or was ever untrue to you or to my home?"

"These are mere words," Dr. Casteen returned, coldly. "Excitement and agitation are not argument, though with persons of moderate intelligence they often appear to serve as well. If you have expressed yourself before others as, to my surprise and regret, you have expressed yourself before me during this interview I can readily conceive that the most unfortunate impression as to our relations may have been conveyed to your hearers. One thing in any case is certain. I was not wrong in supposing that your mind is affected by the frivolous love of change so prevalent in the present day. As you say, no doubt your place can be supplied at home."

Dr. Casteen relinquished his hold on the gate, and faced the wind. Perverted in feeling and egotistic as he had shown himself, there was a touch of true pathos in his tone, as he said:—

"Yes, go, go. The lovers of labour and wisdom have ever been few. If they grow fewer, what wonder in a time corrupted by the worship of material luxury, like the present? Loneliness is invariably the penalty of resistance to the tendency of the age,

however poverty-stricken and barren that age may be. Your friends shall no longer have cause to imagine that I sacrifice you to my own pursuits and inclinations, Lydia. I desire that you will write to-day, accepting the proposal Mrs. Denison has made you, and stating distinctly that you do so at my request. And now, my love, we will, if you please, go indoors. I have already exceeded by some minutes, the time usually allotted to exercise. When you have written the letter in question, you will perhaps be good enough to join me in the study?"

Some victories are less exhilarating even than a defeat. As Lydia spoke her voice trembled.

"Of course, papa—but I cannot go abroad, I do not care to go now," she said. Dr. Casteen moved slowly along the path with his head bowed.

"If you had asked me to stay because you would miss me—because you cared to have me with you, it would be different. I should stay gladly then. For you, dear papa, I would do anything," she went on gently.

"I and my work are one, and cannot be disjoined," Dr. Casteen answered. He spoke in short broken sentences, for it was difficult to articulate with the gusty wind driving the rain in his face.

"I must entreat you to exercise a little more self-control—prayer spare me any more of these protests—this emotion—this instability of thought and intention. I am really unequal to further discussion. I have delivered my *ultimatum*. You have obtained the promise of your coveted pleasure. Let that suffice. Labouring as I do under a keen sense of disappointment, and with the prospect before me of unshared and unhonoured study, it behoves me to husband carefully the remnants both of my mental and bodily strength."

"Ah! That is cruel," exclaimed Lydia.

She turned away, and stood still in the middle of the path letting the rain beat on her bare head. Her heart was sore for a little affection. Her thoughts bitter. Her sense of injury keen. Her father, as usual, had contrived to put her wholly in the wrong.

Suddenly she heard him call her. At once anger gave place to anxiety. Lydia followed him quickly through the porch into the passage.

"I shall be greatly obliged," he said, "by your removing my hat and my over-shoes." Lydia did as she was bid. In the end, Lydia invariably did what he bade her.

(To be continued.)

## Our Library List.



THE EARLY LIFE OF SAMUEL ROGERS. By P. W. CLAYDEN. (1 vol. 12s. 6d. *Smith & Elder.*) Mr. Clayden has performed admirably a thoroughly interesting task. Aided by letters and diaries, of which he has made a judicious selection, he not only places the first forty years of Rogers's life before us, but also gives an excellent description of the poet's surroundings, political as well as personal. Mr. Clayden's account of the famous men who formed the brilliant society of the time are terse and graphic. Rogers seems to have been an observant, conventional, somewhat frigid young man, with refined tastes and a wonderful memory for recording conversations. It is the picture he gives of his time rather than his own personality which makes this book so delightful. His descriptions of scenery and his own reflections are somewhat conventional; we are inclined to hurry through them to get to the society of Fox, Sheridan, and all the other famous talkers of whom he gives such fascinating glimpses. Nothing can be more interesting than his diary of a visit to Paris in 1791, where he dined with Lafayette, listened to Mirabeau at the Salle Nationale, and met the chief persons who had taken part in the Revolution.

PERSONAL REMEMBRANCES OF SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK. (2 vols. 16s. *Macmillan.*) These memoirs, which cover the years between 1815 and 1860 and dwell on interesting subjects as well as interesting people, make pleasant reading. Their distinction, however, lies in the excellent stories they contain. The first part, in which Sir Frederick Pollock describes his early life, has most colour and vitality. He was the constant companion of his distinguished father, of whose life he gives an agreeable picture, in London, travelling and on circuit fifty years ago, as well as of his own circle of friends when he was called to the Bar in 1838. Sir Frederick has all his life moved amongst people of literary, artistic, and scientific renown, but he has not the art of giving vivid impressions of those he does describe, and it is, to say the least, tantalising to read lists of the celebrities whom he met and diligently enumerates, without making any record of the talk that was held at these feasts of reason.



**SIR HENRY LAYARD'S EARLY TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES.** Maps and Illustrations. (2 vols. 24s. *Murray*.) It is not often that we have the pleasure of reading so interesting and original a book of travels as this. Our only surprise is that it has not seen the light sooner; but the author's life of official activity may probably account for this delay. The first five chapters are occupied by a narrative of Sir Henry's travels in Syria and Eastern Palestine, from Petra to Aleppo. With Chap. VI. commences the description of his journey with Mr. Mitford to Hamadan. At the end of a year Mitford proceeded to India, and Layard continued his wanderings alone, chiefly among the mountain tribes of Babylonia and the Persian frontier, partly with a view to the discovery of historic remains, partly in the hope of opening up new fields for British trade. Owing to his fortunate cure of a sick boy, he was taken under the protection of a powerful chief of the Bakhtiyari, the boy's father, and lived among his family for some months. It would be impossible, however, to enumerate the extraordinary adventures and the hairbreadth escapes, the robberies and the hardships which Sir Henry experienced. No English traveller has followed his footsteps, but no English reader should now fail to do so.

**LIFE AND LABOUR.** By DR. SAMUEL SMILES. (1 vol. 6s. *Murray*.) It has been said of Dr. Smiles that "he has made almost his own, a part of the literary arena which touches most closely upon our social conditions and the lessons that are needed for our everyday-life," and a man whose works have been translated into every European language may certainly lay claim to no small share of popularity. Dr. Smiles' method in his 'Self Help Series' has been to force home the great rules of morality and success by concrete examples. There is scarcely a man who has succeeded in life whose achievement is not recorded in some of Dr. Smiles' works. The driest maxims are made to live by the charm of the author's unsurpassed skill in biography; it is hardly possible to open the book without lighting on some anecdote or *bon mot*. The highest form of instruction is that wherein the accomplished teacher is merged and lost in the pleasant companion. This seems to us the characteristic feature of Life and Labour.

**IRELAND** (1 vol. 5s. *Fisher Unwin*), by the Hon. EMILY LAWLESS, is a sketch of Irish history from the time of the first stunted, low-browed Formorians to the Home Rule Bill of 1886. The story abounds in picturesque and striking incidents, and Miss Lawless, so far as her space allows, does justice to them; the poetic feeling and power of imaginative sympathy which distinguish her novels make themselves unobtrusively felt in their present sterner service. The events of the last ninety years, bristling with keenly debated questions of high policy, are skilfully outlined, but the author gracefully disclaims any intention of pronouncing judgment on controversial topics. It is specially desir-



able at the present time that English men and women should possess some accurate knowledge about Ireland, and this volume forms an excellent introduction to the subject.

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IN PARIS (1 vol. 10s.), and DAYS NEAR PARIS (1 vol. 10s. *Smith, Elder & Co.*). Mr. AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE continues his admirable series of guide books "with a difference," pointing out the most noteworthy features in the places visited, and amply illustrating his remarks with quotations from historians, memoir-writers, archæologists and critics, as also with woodcuts from his own artistic sketches. To be thoroughly appreciated his volumes should be studied *sur place*, but the duly instructed reader may spend some pleasant half hours in their company at home. Each will inevitably regret the absence of a few favourite passages, such for instance as St. Beuve's *Journée du Guichet*, in the account of Port Royal, or the struggle between Angélique Arnauld and M<sup>de</sup>. D'Estrées at Maubuisson. But enough is given to make grumbling unreasonable. Mr. Hare gives utterance to the curious opinion that "absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure, setting the fashion of ladies' dress to the universe, Paris has probably had less influence upon literature or art than any other of the great capitals."

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THE DEEMSTER. By HALL CAINE. (3 vols. *Chatto & Windus.*) Deemster means nothing worse than a Manx Judge, but the ominous sound of the title is fully borne out. The Deemster's wicked presence pervades the Island, and if he did not bring about the famine and sweating sickness that overtake it, he is the cause of "the deep perfidy of circumstances" which brings the hero to crime: The effects throughout the book remind one of Doré's pictures, they are vivid, striking, and theatrical, rather than life-like. Successful though Mr. Caine is in representing conflicting passions, it is in the occasional lull in the storm of violent emotion that he sometimes strikes the truest notes. The influence of the good bishop, the character of the mild Manx folk, and the glimpses into their lives are admirably given. A high moral tone pervades, and the cause of right is set forth with almost passionate fervour. Those who have prejudices on the subject ought perhaps to be warned that second-sight plays an important part in the story, and that the English language is put to a somewhat violent use.

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PAUL PATOFF. By MARION CRAWFORD. (3 vols. *Macmillan.*) The scene opens brilliantly in Constantinople, and the first chapters which describe the mysterious disappearance in Santa Sophia of a handsome young Russian, who had imprudently addressed a veiled lady in the Valley of Roses, lead one to expect a story of high romance and Eastern flavour. Unfortunately the scene shifts to a country house in England, and though we are told that the party assembled in

it is a very extraordinary one, and a sense of mystery is diligently maintained, nothing except an engagement takes place, and the people behave in the most commonplace way, till they all betake themselves to the Bosphorus, when exciting events and the picturesque again abound. The chief characters are Paul Patoff, the brother of the lost man; his mother, who thinks Paul has murdered his brother, and about whom the great question is raised whether she is mad or not; her relations, who keeps her in a wing of their mansion, and an English professor, who has apparently nothing to do but to discuss Madame Patoff's insanity. Mr. Crawford's versatility is amazing, but the inequality of this book shows that he must pay the cost of very rapid writing.

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THE HUNDREDTH MAN, by FRANK R. STOCKTON (1 vol. 6s. *Sampson Low*) is, as its author's name promises, a thoroughly entertaining novel, though its two plots might perhaps have been more artistically blended. Mr. Stratford, a "cultured" American, seeks to discover the one man in a hundred whom he believes to be pre-eminently endowed beyond his ninety-nine fellows. During his investigation he meets with a learned and lovely maiden, betrothed to a suitor vastly her inferior intellectually; he causes her engagement to be broken off and, resisting temptations to marry her himself, successfully directs her affections towards a conscientious but somewhat colourless friend. Side by side with this government of souls runs the story of a New York restaurant secretly owned by a socially ambitious bank-president. The fortunes of the simple-minded manager, his honest but wide-awake uncle, and his delightfully rustic mother are recounted with unflagging spirit. The scenes of American country life are especially vivid.

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SETH'S BROTHER'S WIFE, by HAROLD FREDERIC (2 vols. *Chatto & Windus*), is also a good American novel. In the opening scenes the dull apathy and sordid pettiness of rustic life are laid bare with impressive realism. To escape from "the living death of mental starvation," Seth, the hero, obtains work on a city journal, but does not prosper according to his ambition. He becomes sentimentally entangled with his sister-in-law, a selfish and excitable town-bred lady, and is thus drawn from his allegiance to a charming and modest cousin. However he has good friends and meets with a stroke of luck. His enthusiasm for political purity causes him to quarrel with his rich elder brother, who is "running for Congress" on quite other principles, and the dispute forms an important factor in the plot. The scene where a terrible tragedy abruptly closes the relations between Seth and his brother's wife is powerful and original. "Aunt Sabrina," with her passionately narrow intensity, makes a strong and pathetic figure; interesting too is the study of Milton the "hired man."